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Primitive Christianity in
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PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANITY IN IRELAND.

A LETTER

TO

THOMAS MOORE, ESQ.

EXHIBITING HIS MISSTATEMENTS IN HIS HISTORY, RESPECTING THE INTRODUCTION OF CHRISTIANITY INTO IRELAND, AND THE RELIGIOUS TENETS OF THE EARLY IRISH CHRISTIANS.

FROM

HENRY J. MONCK MASON, LL.D.

SECOND EDITION.

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LETTER

TO

THOMAS MOORE, ESQ.

My dear Sir,

You will perceive in the signature subscribed to this letter the name of an old acquaintance. The recollection of the character of the society in which our intercourse occurred would induce me to avoid any inimical or discordant conflict with you; while my utter dislike to that mode of contest which has, of late years, been too frequently adopted, and even on theological subjects, would influence me to shun controversy altogether: nevertheless, I feel myself obliged by the great motive of truth to declare, that many of the assertions contained in your first volume of the History of Ireland are not founded in facts; and I am compelled, by the vast influence of those assertions upon the best interests of my fellow-countrymen—their eternal interests in connexion with religion—to declare it faithfully, solemnly, and publicly. I shall, therefore, without further preface, endeavour to prove the two following allegations:—

First, That the account which you have given of the first introduction of Christianity into Ireland is erroneous:

Secondly, That the opinion you have advocated, of the doctrines inculcated by the first missionaries, teachers, and saints in that country, is, with scarcely a single exception, mistaken.

The question between us is, my dear sir, one of the very highest importance, and not by any means one of merely antiquarian research: it is, both directly and indirectly, of great magnitude in its influences—directly, as it is that of religion in Ireland; indirectly, because that the name of religion is, in that country, unhappily interwoven with every political question, and with almost every circumstance of the present day. You are perfectly well aware that authority possesses a powerful sway over the minds of the people of Ireland; despotic, when religion is the occasion upon which it is exercised; irresistible, when, robed in the revered vestments of antiquity, it speaks her mandates; and you have described this trait of national character with equal eloquence and truth, where, in your History, (p. 203) you advert to "that "ready pliancy, that facility, in yielding to new im- "pulses and influences, which, in the Irish character, "is so remarkably combined with a fond adherence "to old usages and customs, and with that sort of "retrospective imagination which for ever yearns "after the past." When, therefore, authority upon a religious question comes dressed in that venerated robe, adjusted with a skill so successful as yours, it

is to be expected that it will operate with an enchantment, which nothing but the touch of Ithuriel's spear can possibly dispel—a fascination, against which no eloquence but that of unpretending truth can at all prevail.

The first point at issue between us, which is the correctness of the account that you have given of the first introduction of Christianity into Ireland, I shall discuss with you but briefly; and this for two reasons—first, because that we have less of information on that question; secondly, because the fact is of itself less important to establish—it matters now but little, comparatively, who were the first Christian missionaries among the Irish, or whence they came; and the material point for us to determine is, the character of the doctrines which they inculcated.

At the very entrance of this argument there is obviously imposed upon me a considerable difficulty—you have no where, I believe, asserted, and therefore I can scarcely assume it as laid down by you, that St. Patrick was the very first person who introduced Christianity into Ireland; while every where you have laboured to produce the impression on the mind that such was the fact. You speak of "the "great epoch of the conversion of the Irish by St. "Patrick" (p. 106); of the time when he "*introduced* "among them the Christian doctrine" (307); you enter upon the subject of religion with an allusion to the "*original* link formed with Rome, from her "having appointed the first Irish missionaries" (237); and, in relating the failure of Palladius in his mission, you say, (210) "he was forced to fly from the

"country, leaving behind him no other memorial of "his labours than the adage, traditional among the "Irish, that not to Palladius but to Patrick did God "grant the conversion of Ireland"—a sentence which fixes this latter to be the *original link* to which you allude. It is indeed impossible to rise from the perusal of your work without having the impression made upon the mind, that you exhibit this eminent person as indeed "the first Irish missionary;" and many will be surprised at my thus wasting time in endeavouring to prove such to have been your object; while in fact you do not say so, but directly and explicitly the reverse; and indeed had you so asserted, you would not have stated the truth.

The first witness whom I shall produce to prove that St. Patrick was not the first Irish missionary is, therefore, your own self; and I shall, as is but just, present your own testimony, and in your own words; where, in giving the account of his great successes in Connaught, (p. 221,) you observe thus—"It is supposed that to these western regions of "Ireland the saint alludes, in his confession, where "he stated that he had visited remote districts where "no missionary had been before;—an assertion im-"portant, as *plainly implying that*, in the more "accessible parts of the country, *Christianity had*, "*before his time, been preached and practised.*"

The evidence of St. Patrick himself is, in the next place—and you allow it—decidedly in my favour: his words in the original are these—"Ubique pergebam causâ vestrâ, etiam usque ad exteras partes, ubi

"nunquam aliquis pervenerat qui baptizaret, aut cle-
"ricos ordinaret, aut populum consummaret"—"I went
"every where to promote your cause, even to remote
"districts where no one had ever arrived who could
"baptize, or ordain clergy, or complete" (perhaps confirm) "the people"—a testimony which appears to be stronger than that which is conveyed in your extract.

Upon the evidence of two witnesses such as these I might be contented to rest my case. The first, you at least must allow to be unimpeachable; and against the second you cannot object, as it is given upon authority and documents which you yourself have produced and relied on: but I have many more witnesses in reserve, and some of them whose credit shall also be confirmed by your introduction and approval.

In your account of the first efforts of Pope Celestine to relieve "the wants of the Irish, and to appoint "a bishop for the superintendence of their infant "church," (p. 209,) you relate, that "the person "chosen for this mission to the Scots believing in "Christ, (for so it is specified by the chronicler,*) "was Palladius, a deacon of the Roman church".... "and, whatever preachers of the faith, foreign or "native, might have appeared previously in Ireland, "it seems certain that, before this period, no

* Prosper Chron. Bass. et Antioch. Coss. It is scarcely necessary to state, and quite unnecessary to prove, that, by *the Scots*, the inhabitants of Ireland were, at that time, exclusively meant. It is not only a truth relied on throughout your work, but one that is denied by no one of any authority that has examined the subject. Us. Prim. p. 734.

"hierarchy had been there instituted; but that in "Palladius the Irish Christians saw their first bishop." Now, as this mission is confessedly "to the Scots* *believing in Christ*," it is manifest that there were Christians in Ireland before it took place; and this is an admission very fully implied by you in this passage.

I proceed now to a circumstance connected with this last; and, although it is not mentioned in your History, yet I feel myself particularly bound in candour to bring it forward; because that, while it shows what was really meant by the chronicler in calling Palladius the *first* bishop of the Irish, and proves also the existence of the Christian religion at an earlier period than that of St. Patrick's arrival, it gives some colour (although but a colour) to the idea of the *original link* with Rome. You know well, and I think you should have mentioned it for the consideration of others, that, in the opinion of Usher, Lloyd, and many writers, the terms Primus Episcopus, used by Prosper, do not signify "*first bishop*" in point of time, but *Primate* in point of dignity.† There is an account, which neither Usher or Lloyd felt themselves authorized to reject, that, about the year 400, Kiaranus, Ailbeus, Declanus, and Ibarus, all of them saints of the Irish nation,

* The Abbé M'Geoghegan also draws this conclusion in his History, p. 231.

† Usher's Primordiæ, p. 800-99, and Lloyd, Bishop of St. Asaph, of Ant. Church Government, p. 84. It should also be mentioned, that the word *Primus* does not appear in the best copies of Prosper's Chronicle. Us. Prim. p. 799.

were sent as it is said from Rome, where they had for some time dwelt, and where they were ordained bishops, into Ireland; that in this island they made many conversions; and founded the sees of Ossory, Ardmore, Emly, and Beckerin, (Beg-Erin, or little Erin in Wexford). This was thirty-one years before the alleged period of St. Patrick's mission; and it was over them that Palladius was, as it is conjectured, appointed Primate, or first bishop, by the Pope.*

I do not, however, dwell upon this account, especially as it is clear that you do not believe it to be according to the truth; for, in p. 227, you state Ailbe, Declan, and Ibar to have been "all disciples of St. Patrick;" in which I entirely agree, for it is quite impossible to reconcile the story of their being active missionaries, and the founders of sees in the year 400, with the record of their respective deaths. I have consulted the Ulster Annals, and find them to place that of Ibar in A.D. 500, and that of Ailbe in 533; and the historians of Declan and Kiaran are said to have fixed theirs at about A.D. 530. (Pat. opusc. note, p. 106.) M'Geoghegan states the birth of St. Kieran A.D. 352, and his death A.D. 549. (p. 161 and 163.) I did not think right, however, to pass by this account unnoticed; if true, it would tend to prove my side of the present argument, although it would assist you in your original link; but, being manifestly fabricated, and so very generally

* Usher Prim. p. 789, and Lloyd, p. 51.

considered to be, it shews how soon the Roman hagiographers, and other writers, were occupied in their fictions respecting the origin of the Christian faith in Ireland.

I return to your own admissions, and draw from them a fifth head of proof. You have given us Pelagius and Celestius, who propagated their false opinions about the year of our Lord 400; you introduce them to our notice thus (p. 206)—"But, "though unfurnished with any direct evidence as "to the religious state of the Irish in their own "country, we have a proof how early they began "to distinguish themselves on the continent, as "Christian writers and scholars, in the persons of "Pelagius, the eminent heresiarch, and his able "disciple Celestius." And you tell us (p. 209) that it was the account given by St. German and Lupus "of the *increasing number* of Christians" in Ireland, "as well as of the inroads already made upon them "by the Pelagian doctrines, that induced Pope "Celestine to turn his attention to the wants of the "Irish," and to send them Palladius, as already mentioned, to their "infant church." Now I must dwell somewhat more at length upon this subject, as one that is most important, when I have first applied this admission to our present argument. We here have acknowledged an "infant church," an "increasing number of Christians," time even for heresies to spring up, and "Christian writers and scholars," so educated at home as to be enabled to "distinguish "themselves on the continent," some time before St.

Patrick is said to have first preached the gospel in this land. Indeed, you present to us this argument yourself, where, in speaking of Celestius, who was doubtless our countryman, you inform us that, "while "yet a youth, and before he had adopted the Pelagian "doctrines," he, from the monastery of St. Martin of Tours, and "A.D. 369, addressed to his parents *in* "*Ireland* three letters, in the form, as we are told, "of little books, and full of such piety," as Gennadius expresses it, "as to make them necessary to all "who love God." (p. 207–8.) These letters, thus written in the year 369, preceded the arrival of St. Patrick by 62 years; and I cannot avoid remarking that, if your following observation be just, as it must be allowed to be, that "the fact of Celestius thus "sending letters to Ireland, with an implied per-"suasion that they would be read, affords one of "those incidental proofs of the art of writing being "then known to the Irish, which, combining with "other evidence more direct, can leave but little "upon the subject;" we may reason in a manner precisely similar, that they equally prove that their subject matter, Christianity, was not unknown to those to whom they were written; and that the fact itself "affords one of those incidental proofs" in favour of "my argument, which, combining with other evidence "more direct, can leave but little doubt upon the "subject."

While making these acknowledgments here, you have, nevertheless, sought to promote the great object of your argument, which is to prove, that the orthodox

faith of the ancient Irish church was received from Rome, and agrees with her modern tenets; and have taken the opportunity of connecting a pestilent and devastating heresy with the doctrines that were first taught in Ireland, independently of that see, when you allege this island to be the place of the birth and early Christian education of the great Heresiarch Pelagius.* But the authorities upon which you rest your conclusion that he was a monk of Bangor, or Banchor, near Carrickfergus, and not of Bangor in Wales, are altogether insufficient to support it; and very far too weak to form a ground for an insinuation so important as that just alluded to. You admit that it is in general asserted that he was a "Briton;" (p. 206,) and he is certainly so denominated by the venerable Bede, (Eccl. Hist. lib. 1, c. 10;) and by Prosper, in his Chronicle, who notices him thus—"Pelagius Brito Dei gratiam impugnat." But that which places the matter beyond a doubt, as to his not having been a monk of the Irish Bangor, is the fact, that that monastery was not in existence until a long time after his death. Dr. O'Connor, on whose authority you so often rely, informs us that it was founded by St. Comgal, A.D. 559. If you doubt him, look to the Ulster Annals, A.D. 518, where

* By the way, if Pelagius be connected at all with Irish doctrines, it must be especially allowed to have been through the countenance given to him by St. Patrick's successors, whose New Testament, the famed Book of Armagh, contains the arguments of Pelagius, or his prologues, to almost all the Epistles. (Betham's Antiq. Res. p. 261, &c.)

it is recorded thus—"Comgallus, primus abbas Bangorensis, in Hibernià natus." See also ad annos. 601 and 602.

We have now, by testimonies derived from your own admissions, brought up the introduction of Christianity into Ireland, to a period preceding the year of our Lord, 369. I shall, in the next place, inquire of you, upon what principles of evidence do you put aside the testimony of Tertullian, a writer of unquestionable authority as to facts, and whom you have elsewhere relied on? (p. 238.) He wrote about the year 201; and, alluding to the progress of the Gospel, he affirms thus—"Britannorum inaccessa Romanis loca, Christo veró subdita." (p. 206.) This important sentence you present with the following neutralizing comment:—"To what extent Christianity had spread "in Ireland before the mission of St. Patrick, there "are no very accurate means of judging. The boast" —(why should it be called the *boast?*)—"of Tertul- "lian, that in his time a knowledge of the Christian "faith had reached those parts of the British isles, "yet unapproached by the Romans, is supposed to "imply as well Ireland as the northern regions of "Britain"—and doubtless it must include Ireland, or there would be no meaning in the plural *Britannorum*—"nor are there wanting," you proceed to say, "writers who, placing reliance on the assertion of "Eusebius, that some of the Apostles preached the "Gospel in the British isles, suppose St. James to "have been the promulgator of the faith among the "Irish." Now, my dear sir, I would not hesitate to

refer to your own decision, to be made upon calmer reflection, whether or not you are perfectly just in thus confounding the clear testimony of a direct, impartial, and unquestioned authority, such as is Tertullian, upon a mere matter of fact, with second-hand and wild deductions drawn from general declarations. You could not possibly have thought that these two, (to wit, original assertion of a fact, and conjectures based upon the assertion of a fact,) possessed the same character of credibility; and you should not have presented them thus coupled together to your readers. Permit me, at all events, to enroll this slighted evidence of an ancient Father among my proofs, until something better than ridicule or contempt be brought forward to invalidate it.

I must now pass on from the re-examination of your witnesses, to the production of some new ones of my own; such indeed as you should have, in my opinion, taken notice of also. It is surely the duty of an historian to detail to his reader all the important facts connected with his subject, and to withhold nothing from him that may bear upon it, although it may not favor the peculiar bias of his mind. I think, therefore, you are to blame in that, either when adverting to the introduction of Christianity into Ireland, or in discussing the question of the dependence of the Irish on the Romish church, you have not transcribed into your history any part of that which Bede has recorded, respecting the arguments used at the celebrated Synod of Whitby; but have contented yourself with merely remarking, (p. 282,) "that, after speeches

"and replies on both sides, of which Bede has pre-
"served the substance, the king and the assembly at
"large agreed to give their decision in favor of Wil-
"fred." Permit me to supply the defect. You have rightly informed your readers that, in the year 664, this synod or council was assembled at Whitby, in Yorkshire, for the purpose of discussing, before the King Oswin, the question respecting the proper time for celebrating the festival of Easter, and some other points, in which the ancient Irish differed from the Romish church. "The arguments," as you relate, (p. 281–2,) "were temperately and learnedly brought "forward by St. Colman," (a monk of the Columbian order, who had been sent thither to fill the high office of bishop,) "with his Irish clergy, "speaking in defence of the old observances of the "country; while Wilfred, a learned priest, who had "been recently to Rome, undertook to prove the "truth and universality of the Roman method." In his argument, St. Colman made use of the following remarkable words:—"This Easter, which I use to "observe, I received from my elders, who sent me "bishop hither; which all our fathers, men beloved "of God, are known to have celebrated after the "same manner. It is the same which the blessed "Evangelist St. John, the disciple specially beloved "of the Lord, *with all the churches that he did* "*oversee*, is read to have celebrated." And again:— "Can it be believed that such men as our venerable "father Columba, and his successors, would have "thought or acted things contrary to the precepts

"of the sacred pages?"—(Bed. Ecc. Hist. Lib. I. c. 25.) It is exceedingly remarkable, that neither in the passages now quoted, nor in any part of the account, is there any mention whatsoever made by the Irish clergy of St. Patrick, or of their deference to the see of Rome. You assert, in speaking of the dispute about the mode of tonsure, which was "mixed up throughout with the Paschal question," (p. 283–4,) that, "on the part of the Irish, the real motive for "clinging so fondly to their old custom was, that it "had been introduced among them, with *all their* "*other ecclesiastical rules and usages*, by St. Patrick." And again:—"When St. Patrick came on his mission "to Ireland, he introduced the same method of "Paschal computation—which was *then** practised at "Rome."—(p. 268.) Now, I think it quite sufficient to refer to the history of this council for a proof of your erroneous views upon the subject. Whatever may have influenced the minds of the southern Irish, ("Gentes Scotorum quæ in australibus Hiber-"niæ insulæ partibus morabantur."—Bede Ecc. Hist. l. 3, c. 3,) "some of their greatest saints, the monks "of the abbey of Hy, and many others among the "northern Scots," (as the Abbé M'Geoghegan expresses himself,) rejected the proposed innovation; and, in their reasonings upon the subject, drew all their arguments of authority and traditions, not from St. Patrick or St. Peter, but solely from St. Columb.

* This method, which was not correct, was afterwards changed at Rome; but adhered to by the original churches of the British isles, with somewhat of unreasonable pertinacity.

kille and St. John. This fact you fully allow in your history, p. 273, &c.* It follows, therefore, either that they derived not these usages from the former and the see of Rome; or that, allowing St. Patrick to have also used them, they considered him to be of far less account as an authority than St. Columbkille; while they refer to St. John, in a manner which proves that they looked upon him as their own and "chiefest Apostle." (2 Cor. xi. 5.) I shall return to the point, as connected with this important document; and shall only remark here, that many modern writers, relying upon the silence of Bede in this place and elsewhere respecting St. Patrick, have supposed the entire history of his apostleship to be a fable; but, although much of it is composed of, and all of it blended with, false legend, I think the great body of evidence is in its favor as a general truth; and I would make use of the material fact of the silence of Bede on the subject—of such a writer as the venerable Bede, one of the most accredited historians of the Roman Catholic church, and one who composed

* You appear to be mistaken in your comment on this fact, where you say, "to the influence exercised over that part of the "kingdom by the successors of St. Columba this perseverance "is in a great measure to be attributed." It was not to that alone, the successors of this saint were at this time established in the island of Hy, over which they doubtless had great authority, and which was the last place that acquiesced in the Roman method: but it was in the north of Ireland, if any where, that the influence of the successors of St. Patrick also especially prevailed; it was there they had then their apostolic city; and the north was the portion of the country in which St. Patrick chiefly laboured and lived, in which he spent his last most influential days, and where he died. The prejudice of the northerns is, therefore, to be traced up higher.

his history within sixty-seven years of the transaction recorded—rather for the purpose of correcting your monopolizing enthusiasm, and that of others, respecting your favorite saint, than for an occasion of running into the opposite and sceptical system.*

But I have another reason for objecting to your having withheld this history from the consideration of your readers; you could scarcely have been ignorant how it has induced several persons to join in the opinion, not only that some of the peculiarities of the Irish church, such as its mode of celebrating Easter, and of tonsure, its offices, and its monastic

* I am quite aware of the hypotheses respecting St. Patrick, put forth principally by Sir W. Betham, in his account of the Book of Armagh. (Irish Antiq. Res. p. 243.) He supposes a *Patrick* to have been the first Apostle of Ireland, at a very early period; (pages 287 and 315;) that there was a second of the name, and that he, "or the Roman Patrick and Palladius "were the same person;" that "the Pope saw the advantage "of giving a name to this missionary, which was cherished "and venerated by the people to whom he was sent;" but that "Palladius, or any of his immediate successors, never "bore the name of Patrick, while they lived."—"This name "was given them in the seventh century," for the purpose aforesaid. One great foundation of this system is the silence of Bede; but, without at all entering into a discussion respecting it—which is unnecessary here, because Sir William and I both agree in our opinion of an early mission; and both of us reject much that is claimed for the Patrick of 431, upon the evidence of this silence.—I cannot but remark, that if it proves any thing, it shews that, at no period previous to the Synod of Whitby did any person exist, bearing the name of Patrick, and possessing such an extravagant degree of veneration in the minds of the Irish Christians, as is now supposed to have been connected with this cherished name; for if there had been such, his authority would surely have been adduced at the synod, as well as that of St. Columbkille and his successors.

rules, but that even Christianity itself, were introduced by Christian Missionaries taught by St. Irenæus, bishop of Lyons, the pupil of Polycarp of Smyrna, the immediate disciple of St. John—the truth of this tradition is very much confirmed by the above mentioned argument of St. Colman, more especially as it appears in the life of Wilfred, by two of his biographers. One of these relates, that St. Colman said thus: "We with the same confi-"dence celebrate the same, as his disciples Poly-"carpus and others did; neither dare we, for our "parts, neither will we change this." The other, Fridegodus, comes still closer to the point in these lines, describing the words of Colman—

> "Nos seriem patriam, non frivola scripta tenemus;
> "Discipulo Eusebii Polycarpo dante Johannis," &c.

"We hold by our country's course," or usage,—and not "frivolous writings—such as was given by Polycarp "the disciple of St. John." (See Us. Rel. of Ant. Ir. p. 103. Ed. 1631.) It will be allowed that all this savours much in itself of an introduction of Christianity into Ireland through these holy men, while it leads me to another presumptive proof of the fact.

In page 297 you write thus:—"One of the chief "arguments, indeed, employed by Ledwich, in his "attempt to show that the early church of Ireland "was independent of the See of Rome, is founded "on those traces of connexion, through Greek "and Asiatic missionaries, with the east, which, "*there is no doubt*, are to be found in the records "and transactions of that period." The fact of this

connexion you admit; of its traces you have *no doubt;* and I therefore cannot but advance it as one of those "incidental proofs," in favour of my argument, which, combining with other evidence more direct, and especially coupled with the historical accounts of Bede, "can leave but little doubt upon "the subject." The impression made by it upon your mind seems to have been of this character. "Had "such instances, however," you say, "been numerous "enough even to prove more than a casual and occa- "sional intercourse with those regions, it would not "have served the purpose this reverend antiquary "sought to gain; as, at the time when Christianity "was first introduced into Ireland, the heads of the "Greek church were on the best terms with the "See of Rome." You clearly thus abandon all opposition to the eastern connexion, although it is equally clear that you do it with no very good grace; and the instances thus acknowledged, although they may not serve the purpose of Dr. Ledwich, are certainly quite sufficient for mine, in the present argument; which is to shew an introduction of Christianity into Ireland, previously to the mission of St. Patrick—with this admission I am quite contented. Although it is not material to the point now under discussion, yet, as it bears upon the question, I shall subjoin, in a note, the opinions of St. Irenæus respecting the Romish church, which will prove you to be somewhat under a mistake in respect to the latter part of your assertion.*

* He complains of it thus—"That the schismatics at Rome "had corrupted the sincere law of the church, which led to

The history of this connexion is involved in the greatest obscurity; but, besides the evidence of the glimmerings which, as you assert, undoubtedly *prove it*, you might have given us some stronger lights from O'Connor's Prolegomena, than you have afforded us through him. He quotes the following passage from Gennadius, which, had you coupled with it that weaker one respecting Cœlestius, that you tell us has been "rather unaccountably brought forward," in proof of the "early introduction of monastic institutions into "Ireland," this learned man would have appeared to have had something better to adduce in support of his position. Gennadius must have written, according to Baronius, before the year 493, and his words are as follows (de Scrip. ill. c. 44.): "Placuit nempe "altissimo, ut S. Athanasius, ex Ægypto pulsus ab "Arianis, vitam monasticam, usque ad id tempus in "occidente ignominiosam; Scotis, Attacottis, aliis- "que barbaris Romanum imperium vastantibus; S.S. "Ambrosio et Martino opem ferentibus; propalaret, "ann. circ. 336." (O'Con. Proleg. I. p. 78.) Let this passage be translated in what manner it may, it affords me, if genuine, an authority for connecting the Scots, or Irish, with Christianity, in the year 336.

"the greatest impieties. These opinions," he adds, "the "Presbyters, who lived before our times, who were also dis- "ciples of the apostles, did in no wise deliver. I, who saw "and heard the blessed Polycarp, am able to protest, in the "presence of God, that if that apostolic Presbyter had heard "of these things, he would have stopped his ears, and cried "out, according to his custom—'Good God, for what times "'hast thou reserved me, that I should suffer such things!'"—Euseb. lib. v. c. 20; in Ledwich's Antiquities.

It is a curious fact, and one of some importance on this head, that the use of the Greek alphabet was employed in the writing of one of the most ancient books that we possess in Ireland—the book of Armagh. Sir W. Betham has presented us with a fac simile from it of the Pater Noster, written in Greek capitals, (in Antiq. Res. 2d part;) I have myself particularly observed the use of such letters in this book; for instance, in the word *finitum*, in the subscription to one of the Gospels, where the Greek letter ϕ occurs, instead of *f*, thus, *φinitum*. This circumstance is the more extraordinary, as the Irish *f* possesses the full force of ϕ; had the Greek χ indeed been used instead of the *ch* or the dotted ċ, which are now employed, rather clumsily, (and in an inscription in the Book of Armagh several times,) to express the power of that letter, it would not have been so remarkable. This circumstance cannot be accounted for by any hypothesis short of a primitive intercourse between the Irish Christians and the Greeks. In fine, on this head I think the foregoing account of the argument at Whitby is irresistible evidence; especially when we connect it with the universally acknowledged existence, at the earliest period in Ireland, of all those peculiarities which especially distinguished the eastern church. The following fact must not be passed over unnoticed. It is recorded in the Greek life of St. Chrysostom, which you will find in Saville's edition of his works, (in T. viii. p. 321), that "τινες κληρικοι τῶν ωκεανικων νησων"—"certain

" clergymen, who dwelt in the isles of the ocean," repaired from the utmost borders of the habitable world to Constantinople, between the years 842 and 847, when Methudius was Patriarch there, to inquire " of certain ecclesiastical traditions, and the perfect " and exact computation of Easter." So tenacious were these islanders, who were most probably Irish, of their traditional customs ; and so lively, even at this late period, their veneration for that church, from which they confessedly received them.

In following up this latter argument, a new one presents itself, in favor of an early entrance of the Gospel into Ireland, from the testimony of St. Chrysostom —a Greek father, who wrote about the year 400 ; and who, in three several passages of his works, refers to the existence of Christianity in the British Isles; one of these you have yourself relied on (p. 237, note,) as an authority for the ancient reception in Ireland of a peculiar Roman Catholic doctrine. In his Tract, " Quod Christus sit Deus," written circ. A. D. 388, (Ed. Sav. T. vi. p. 635,) he says, as thus rendered into Latin, " Britannicæ insulæ, virtu- " tem verbi senserunt ; sunt enim etiam illic fundatæ " ecclesiæ, et erecta altaria,"—" for there also," within the British isles, " are churches established, " and altars erected." Again, in his 28th sermon on the 2d epistle to the Cor. 12. (iii. 696.) " In quam- " cunque Ecclesiam ingressus fueris, sive apud Mauros, " sive apud ipsas Britannicas insulas, &c." " Into what- " soever church you should enter, whether among the " Moors, or in those British *isles*, &c." The third

instance I shall enlarge on in another place; it is where he says, "although thou shouldst go to the ocean, and "those British isles, &c. thou shouldst hear all "men, every where, discoursing matters out of the "Scriptures." Tom. viii. p. 111.

I shall briefly allude to some glimmerings of light which our native annals, or other documents, have cast upon the subject now before us. In writing of Cormac, king of Ireland, about the year of our Lord 254, you mention, (p. 132) that "by some writers it "is alleged, that he was converted to Christianity seven "years before his death; being, it is added, the third "person in Ireland who professed that faith before the "coming of St. Patrick." Allusions are made, in a poem supposed to have been written about the year 220, by Olioll Olum, king of Munster, which demonstrate that the writer was at least acquainted with the existence of the Christian religion; and, for that reason, Mr. O'Reilly, the secretary of the Iberno-Celtic Society, concludes, but somewhat too hastily, in a note to the Transactions of that body, that the poem must be of a later date.

These slight gleamings shew nothing perhaps separately, and indeed they are but individual instances; but I trust that I have now produced abundance of "other evidence more direct," which will fully bear me out in my first assertion, "that "the account which you have given of the first intro-"duction of Christianity into Ireland is erroneous;" and that it was not only known, but established there, long previously to the year 431.

There is still a strong matter of presumptive evidence in reserve, to be collected from the certainty of the preaching of the Gospel in Great Britain, long before it was visited by St. Austin; and the great improbability that, while the intercourse between that country and Ireland was confessedly quite continual, no spring of missionary zeal should have existed, to press it into a pagan land within sight even of its shores. Whether Tertullian was right or wrong in the fact, his expressions, as descriptive of the Evangelical Spirit, is no *boast*; and it is almost incredible, that its zeal should have lain frozen for centuries on a coast but 18 miles distant; within view of the fire tower, and of the burning hecatombs to Moloch; and have left it to an emissary from Rome, in the year 431, to raise the first outcry against such abominations. This is very unlike the history of that religion which, even in the lifetime of the first Apostle of the Gentiles, was already preached in all the Roman world; and becomes absolutely incredible, when we consider the persecutions which, for the first three centuries, pressed its preachers continually westward. The fact—which appears from your own admission, and which Bede has distinctly asserted—that, before the arrival of Saint Austin, the British and Irish churches agreed in several points both of discipline and of doctrine, in which they differed diametrically from the church of Rome, and to which they obstinately adhered in contempt of her authority, demonstrates still further the truth, of an early mutual connexion, under circumstances quite independent of the interference of that See.

I shall now proceed to demonstrate, in the second place, that the opinion you have advocated of the doctrines inculcated by the first missionaries, saints, and teachers in that country is, with scarcely a single exception, mistaken.

I shall in this part of our discussion be much more diffuse; for, as has already been stated, it is a matter of very little comparative importance whether it was from Rome or from Greece, from the disciples of St. Peter or St. John, that Ireland received the first truths of the gospel, if it appear that its primitive saints, and among them the acknowledged missionaries of Rome, "on most of the leading points of "Christian doctrine, professed the opinions at present "entertained by Protestants." This is the allegation of Archbishop Usher, of which you declare that "rarely has there been hazarded an assertion so little "grounded on fact." (p. 237.) Now, sir, in taking up the gauntlet for this wise and learned man, "the "admirable Usher," as you justly style him, I shall endeavour to prove these observations of yours to be peculiarly applicable to your own argument; and, selecting the period of nearly two centuries from the alleged arrival of St. Patrick in Ireland, or from the year 431 to A.D. 600,* I shall shew that, within that

* The year 600 is a most proper period to fix on, as it was about this time that St. Austin was sent on his mission to the English by Pope Gregory the First, and submission to the see of Rome was especially and urgently claimed from the British Christians. But it is particularly suitable upon another and a national account, which I shall explain from Usher's Primordia, 913, as quoted and relied on by the Abbe M'Geoghegan, (Hist.

time, none of the particular tenets of the church of Rome that are mentioned in your book, and against which the reformed church at present protests, were holden by the early Irish Christians. In doing so, I shall transcribe all that you have put forth in text or note, in your short four pages, upon each separate head, in order that I may do the greater justice to your argument. I shall then refute the substance, in the order in which you have advanced it; and still further endeavour, if possible, to fix the date of the entrance of each particular doctrine into the creed of the Irish Roman Catholic church; and to demonstrate, that they are all of them condemned by or contrary to the Scriptures, and therefore could none of them

D'Irlande, v. 1, p. 321). "Usserius," he says, "apres un "ancient MS. autentique, distingue trois differentes classes de "saints dans l'Irlande, qui correspondent aut cinquieme et "sixieme siecles." These differed from the rest of Christendom in their liturgy, &c. mass, modes of tonsure, and time of celebrating Easter; and of them it is quaintly said—"Primus ordo "sanctissimus, secundus ordo sanctior, tertius sanctus; primus "sicut sol ardescit, secundus sicut luna, tertius sicut "stellæ," &c. "the first order was most holy, the second "holier, the third holy; the first glows as the sun, the second "as the moon, the third as the stars." The first continued from St. Patrick, A.D. 431, during four reigns, to A.D. 515, or, as you make it, A.D. 542; the second during four more, to A.D. 558; the third for other four, to about the year 600. I will therefore extend my period of pure doctrine to that date; although, upon the authority of this very document, approved of by M'Geoghegan, and acquiesced in to some extent by yourself, (p. 241.) I might have perhaps more properly limited it to A.D. 542, or at the latest 558. It must not be omitted that it affords, at the very setting out, decided proofs of a rapid degeneracy in the Irish church; I refer the reader to the original, in order that he may see this fully exhibited.

have been maintained by the very primitive teachers of Christianity, the apostles and evangelists. They are like the rust that covered the shield of Scriblerus, which, although it could not have been so antiquated as that which it encrusted, yet gave to it, in the eyes of many an antiquarian, its only value; while common sense could not but discover that, while it proved its antiquity, it was only by presenting the melancholy proofs of corruption.

But, previously to entering upon the argument, I feel it to be quite necessary to make some prefatory observations, respecting the manner in which you have treated the subject, and the grounds upon which your opinions are founded—the documents to which you refer, and on which you rely.

With respect to the first, it is essential to point it out, lest your reader should be deluded into false impressions, through the effect of your apparent indifference to the importance of the subject. Is a question which deeply influences the prejudices of our destitute and ignorant people, in regard to their best interests in this world, and their entire concerns in an eternal one, deserving of serious consideration, or not? If it be, why have you so much neglected the proper duty of an historian, as to give it so very small a proportion of yours? Again—is all "the learning of the admirable Usher" worthy of only four pages' notice in your book, together with this small meed of extorted praise? Or is the subject beneath the dignity of history to descend to? Are your facts so manifest, so indisputable, so conceded, that they need only to be stated that they

may be received? or are your arguments so overwhelming, or your own authority so preponderating, that conviction and concession must necessarily follow in your wake? I confess that it does not strike me so; on the contrary, your conduct as an historian does appear to be most reprehensible, whether it be viewed with reference to the manner in which you have exhibited and disposed of the reasoning of others, or attempted, ex cathedra, to impose your own opinion upon the public; and I perceive much in it of that modern method of brushing away all that is venerable, with bustling and bold assertion; of throwing into a lumber corner, sober history, as an obselete ephemeris; and of establishing preconceived system upon the light proof of unsifted report: this, my dear sir, may very well answer a political and momentary purpose, but can never assist in accomplishing a literary or durable object.

With respect to the documents which you refer to, I object, in the first place, to your manner of quoting them. It is necessary, in my own defence, to state, that in this you greatly embarrass those who dissent from you; and too often, like the ink-fish, compel them to contend with you in darkened waters. For instance, you make no special reference to the writings where Rome is styled, the "Head of Cities."—(I select this only for example)—you do not refer to the books, or pages of books, where we shall find your ancient canons, and other proofs; nor to that part of the lives of St. Brendan, St. Bridget, or of other works, from which you have borrowed certain

passages. This, besides giving your opponent some trouble, and putting difficulties in his way, which in this case I trust I have surmounted, compels him to the proof of a negative; and, unless he have perused all the authors to which you allude, and made the fullest possible research—in one place among the eight folio volumes of Chrysostom's difficult Greek—he never can with confidence either deny your conclusions, or answer them; or be assured that they are those precisely to which you meant to advert. This is obviously a great disadvantage to me, and a very unforensic mode of arguing on your part; and I feel myself compelled to add, that many of your quotations bear with them internal evidence, that you have frequently taken them at second hand, and without consulting the original documents referred to.

I object also very much to the authorities upon which you do rely; you have endeavoured to fix a false credit upon certain which are of little or no value; and have, as we have already seen, attempted to cast others of the first stamp entirely into the shade, or to disparage them altogether. Thus it is that while, with very inadequate salvos (p. 233, 236), you have set forward with too high a character, and amply quoted, the dark biography of your bigoted monks, or the twilight glimmerings of our more enlightened annalists, you have often entirely excluded, or very cautiously admitted, the light that beamed from the collected learning of Usher, or that would illustrate the subject from the dim but steady lamp of the venerable Bede. You have

embodied into history many of the vague accounts given of your hero St. Patrick, so as, with consummate ingenuity, to present us with a picture only short of the miraculous,* but well set off with the marvellous, and adorned with "circumstances," as you express it, (p. 218) "full of what may be called the poesy of real life;" while you have disembodied *from* history many of the dull prose facts of the most intelligent, and most accredited, of the early writers of the Roman Catholic Church in these islands.

But I shall, notwithstanding, take up the gauntlet that you have thrown down; and shall even contend against you with none but Roman Catholic writers or authorities, and not state a fact singly from any Protestant witness whom you have not yourself produced. With respect to St. Patrick and his works, it is necessary still further to remark, that I have considered the arguments on both sides, contending for and denying the existence of this saint, in his character of apostle of Ireland, and have inquired into the genuineness of his Opuscula; and I think the weight of argument to be in favour of the affirmative side, so far as to establish him as a

* I am more pleased with the open avowal of M'Geoghegan, and other Roman Catholic writers, of the miracles wrought by St. Patrick, rejecting, indeed, the absurdity of modern legends—the words of the Abbé are as follows (Hist. D'Irlande, v. i. p. 237):—"Cependant on ne doit pas douter "qu'il n'en ai fait plusieurs bien veritables. Il a fallu que "Dieu lui ait donné ce pouvoir, pour convertir un peuple "idolatre." I shall make some observations on this point, towards the end of this letter.

great and holy man, a chief, but not the first, missionary to this island; to stamp with doubt his letter to Coroticus, and to believe his confession, as "authentic writings from his hand;" and to give credit to some of the canons of such of his synods as you refer to as authentic also. (p. 223.) Among other reasons for my agreeing with you in thinking that the confession is genuine, is the great purity of the Christian doctrine that pervades it; the holy breath of prayer that forms its atmosphere, and the frequent reference to the sole authority of Scripture that is to be found in it. It is also certain that the version of the Bible thus so often appealed to is peculiar, and common to the copies that have been found in Ireland; it is in Latin, and differs somewhat from that of Jerome, agreeing rather with the rendering of the Greek* Septuagint,

* I must take this opportunity of explaining myself upon one point, that I may avoid the appearance either of contradiction, or of credulity. If I quote from the ancient account given of the three orders of saints, from the canons of early synods, or from any other documents relied on by Roman Catholic writers, I am not to be considered as admitting them to be genuine, but merely as using the weapons of my adversaries in that style of logical reasoning well known as an *argumentum ad hominem.* Thus, if I show, from the context of the Book of Armagh, that a canon quoted from it does not justify your conclusions, I am not, therefore, to be supposed to set up that Book as authority. As for the works edited by Sir James Ware, under the title of "Opuscula S. Patricii," I have, upon maturer acquaintance, learned to consider the far greater part of them to be spurious or corrupted, always excepting the confession. The same experience in research increases my conviction, that the great missionary Patrick was not an emissary of the see of Rome; and that his having been so is the gratuitous assumption of Romanists of later ages.

than with it, in places where these versions differ from each other.

The first tenet you mention is perhaps the most material of any, although it is not a point of doctrine, because it is connected with the great authority which influences all.—You introduce it thus: "We find *in* "*a canon* of one of the earliest synods held in Ireland, "a clear acknowledgment of the *supremacy of the* "*Roman See.* Nor was this recognition confined "merely to words; as, on the very *first serious* "*occasion* of controversy which presented itself, the "dispute relative to the time of celebrating Easter, it "was resolved, conformably to the words of this canon, "that the question should be referred to the Head of "Cities; and, a deputation being accordingly des-"patched to Rome for the purpose, the Roman "practice on this point was ascertained and adopted."

Now that a certain degree of honour, but very far indeed short of supremacy, was given to the See of Rome, and was in some manner acknowledged by the church that was promoted by St. Patrick in Ireland, cannot be doubted; and it necessarily followed from the connexion which is allowed to have been formed with it by that saint—so far you have truth on your side—but, on this small stock you had no right to graft the allegations with which the above sentence abounds. In refutation of them I am prepared to shew, first, that there is no genuine canon of an ancient Irish synod, acknowledging the supremacy of Rome; and none at all that contains words denominating her the "Head of Cities"—Secondly, that,

" on the very first serious occasion of controversy that " presented itself," which was not that respecting Easter, the question was not referred by the Irish Christians to Rome; but on the contrary, her interference in it was entirely slighted by them—Thirdly, that in " the " dispute relative to the time of celebrating Easter," the facts were very different indeed from what you have represented them to be—Fourthly, that nothing like the supremacy now acknowledged by the Roman Catholics was attributed to Rome, by the Irish Church, for two centuries after the arrival of St. Patrick—nor, fifthly, *could* such a claim have existed, or been made, until above a century after his decease.

There is no genuine canon of an ancient Irish synod, acknowledging the supremacy of Rome; and none at all containing the words, " the Head of Cities," as referring to her. That to which I presume you allude, is taken from an ancient book of the church of Armagh, and will be found quoted by Archbishop Usher, in his Religion of the Ancient Irish, p. 87. It is not among those whose " authen- " ticity has been by high and critical authority " admitted;" but manifestly one of those which you say are " pronounced to be of a much later date," p. 225; and therefore it has been excluded by Spelman and Wilkins, from their collections, and from the canons edited among St. Patrick's Opuscula, by Sir James Ware. It does indeed contain internal proofs of its much later origin, for it speaks of a reference, for judgment in the first instance, " ad "cathedram *Archiepiscopi* Hiberniensium, i. e. Pa-

"tricii;" "to the chair of the Archbishop of the Irish, i.e. "Patrick;" while the fact is undoubted, and thus stated in your own words (p. 224), that "it was not till "the beginning of the eighth century that the title of "Archbishop was known in Ireland."

The words of this canon, making mention of the See of Rome, are as follows—it decrees, of any cause which cannot readily be determined by the prelate of Armagh, "ad sedem Apostolicam decrevimus esse "mittendam, id est ad Petri Apostoli cathedram, "auctoritatem Romæ urbis habentem;"—"we decree "that it shall be sent to the Apostolic See, that is, "to the chair of the Apostle Peter, having the "authority of the city of Rome." Whosoever desires to see this decree, with its retinue of apocryphal matter, will find it transcribed from the Book of Armagh into Sir William Betham's Antiquarian Researches, p. 415–6; and I am confident that you will no longer rely on it, when you learn, that the document in which it appears in the above-mentioned book, repeats the very story of St. Brigid's acquaintance with St. Patrick, which you have stated to be impossible in fact. It asserts that, "between St. Patrick, and Brigid, and St. Columba, "a friendship of love took place, so great that they "had but one heart and design." You have fixed the death of St. Patrick to the year 465, (p. 226) and the birth of St. Columbkille to 521 (p. 242:) and you tell us, very truly (p. 258), that Brigid "was a child of twelve years old when St. Patrick

"died;" and "died herself A. D. 525, four years "after the birth of St. Columbkille"—as for the friendship of the former for the latter of these saints it must have been posthumous indeed—so much for the credibility of this precious record.*

I have made some inquiry respecting the epithet, "Head of Cities;" and the first occasion on which I find it applied by the Irish to Rome, is in the letter of Cummianus, which you mention in your 271st page, and to which I shall hereafter refer (see Sylloge, p. 34.)—It was written about the year 633. I find the same epithet in the letter of St. Adamnanus, in the same collection (p. 43), which bears date A. D. 700; both of these years were more than two centuries after the first arrival of St. Patrick; and the canon above quoted, if at all genuine, must have been of still later date.

But, secondly, "the first serious occasion of controversy" was not that concerning Easter; nor was its decision referred by the Irish Christians to Rome: the contrary was the fact, and your own book shall prove it. The date of the paschal dispute was A. D. 633, or thereabouts—(see your Hist. p. 272.) We shall turn now to the 264th page. "It is supposed," you say, "to have been during his stay at Milan, "that Columbanus addressed that spirited letter to

* I must be excused if I hesitate to give any further opinion here respecting the Book of Armagh, not having had an opportunity to examine its contents and their handwriting, since I have had reason to suspect that it contains much apocryphal matter.

"Boniface IV. respecting the question of the three "chapters." Now, this letter, and this discussion, must have preceded the paschal controversy by some years; for you inform us that St. Columbanus died "on the 21st of November, A.D. 615." That this question, the nature of which I need not detail, was a serious one, you have sufficiently proved, where you represent it to have engaged the attention of princes, in a manner that "*awakened the alarm* of the Roman court," and formed a subject for "the "decision of the fifth general council held in the "year 553:" it indeed agitated the entire Christian world, and was therefore a serious, as well as a previous, occasion. Your comment on this letter is as follows:—"Setting aside the consideration of the "saint's orthodoxy on this point, his letter cannot "but be allowed the praise of unshrinking manliness "and vigour. Addressing Boniface himself in no "very complaisant terms, he speaks of his prede- "cessor, Pope Vigilius, with bitter, and in some "respects deserved, reproach; declaring that pope to "have been the prime mover of all the scandal that "had occurred." But this, you say, is "compatible" with "the most profound and implicit reverence "towards the papacy." What—to abuse two successive popes, and in this manner, and upon a question of orthodoxy! I leave this to the reader to determine. At all events, you are surely under the obligation of proving that "profound and implicit reverence" by some overt act, and not merely to imagine it first, and then to make conclusions from it. Yet it may

be said, and with far more propriety, that, after all, St. Columbanus was only an individual, and not the Irish church; but that he spoke the sentiments of that church is quite indisputable from the testimony of Cardinal Baronius, with which you must have been acquainted, for it has been quoted by Archbishop Usher (p. 69), in his work which you refute. The cardinal informs us that "ALL *the bishops that were* "*in Ireland, with most earnest study, rose up jointly* "*for the defence of the three chapters.* And, when "they perceived that the church of Rome did both "receive the condemnation of the three chapters, and "strengthen the fifth synod with her consent, they "departed from her, and clave to the rest of the "schismatics—animated with that vain confidence, "that they did stand for the Catholic faith, while "they defended those things that were concluded "in the council of Chalcedon;" against which the decree of the fifth synod was opposed. Whether or not the Irish deserved the name of schismatics I shall not now inquire; the entire transaction demonstrates, that any connexion our early church might have had previously with Rome was quite voluntary and independent; and that, so far from acknowledging her supremacy, "on the very first serious occasion of "controversy which presented itself," the Irish bishops decidedly and *unanimously* opposed and rejected her authority. The date of this occurrence in Baronius' annals is 566, sixty-seven years before that which you call the first occasion, and which I now come to—the reference to the "Head of Cities" on the controversy respecting Easter.

This matter divides itself into two distinct histories, the relation of which will demonstrate, that you had no right whatsoever to assert, that for the decision of the question, "a deputation was despatched to Rome" by the Irish church. That deputation, of which you have given an account in your 271st page, was sent so late as the year 633; and, as Bede expressly informs us, (lib. 3, c. 3, Ec. Hist.) and you have allowed, by the inhabitants of the southern part of the island —"Gentes Scotorum quæ in Australibus Hibernicæ "insulæ partibus morabantur." We have already seen that the Abbé M'Geoghegan has stated, that the Roman mode of celebrating Easter was not conformed to by "some of their greatest saints, viz. St. Colum- "banus, St. Columba, St. Aidan, St. Finian, St. "Colman, the monks of the Abbey of Hy, and many "others among the northern Scots," or Irish—the reference, therefore, made to Rome was not by the native Irish church. But even in the manner in which the story of that deputation is told by Cummianus, in his letter, although he confers upon Rome the respectful title of the "Head of Cities," it appears manifest, that she was not then considered as possessing, solely and exclusively, the supreme authority in ecclesiastical matters. He does, indeed, as you have mentioned, (p. 272,) enforce "the great argu- "ment derived from the unity of the church;" but he also relies, as you have not thought fit to mention, on "the canonical decree of the FOURFOLD APOSTOLIC "SEE, to wit, of Rome, Jerusalem, Antioch, and "Alexandria." "Statutum canonicum *quaternæ sedis*

"*Apostolicæ*, Romanæ, viz. Hierosolymitanæ, An-
"tiochenæ, Alexandrinæ." So that it appears, even after our limit of time, A.D. 600, that, in whatever degree of estimation the Head of Cities might have been possibly holden, she was not considered, even by her best friends in Ireland, as *solely* supreme in matters of ecclesiastical controversy.

But there is another portion of this subject which remains to be considered. The greatest of the Irish saints, and the northern part of the island, united with the monks of Iona, in adhering, quite in opposition to Rome, to the ancient mode of celebrating Easter. This fact you acknowledge, (p. 273,) although not so fully as it is to be implied from Bede. The account of the Synod of Whitby, as related by that historian, has been given before; the arguments made use of by the Irish clergy at that meeting were, the practice of St. Columbkille and his successors, traditionally continued from St. John the Apostle; not a single word of St. Patrick, or St. Peter. I have remarked upon this most striking fact before, in connection with our consideration of the former of those saints, as the first great missionary from Rome; I shall urge it here again, as it bears upon the supremacy of St. Peter—and strange to say, so far from this being referred to by the Irish church, it is not even mentioned by them in the argument. The matter, indeed, was brought into discussion, in consequence of letters from Pope Honorius I. and the clergy of Rome, addressed to the people of Ireland; but these were couched in terms which were far

from implying an assumed superiority ;* the decision was left to, and made by the King ; and Wilfred, the Romish agent, instead of demurring to the jurisdiction, argued, apparently for the first time—(certainly Oswin and his people were not previously convinced of it)—for the authority of St. Peter. All this is very unlike the interference of an acknowledged supremacy; and unquestionably it was quite the reverse of acknowledged by the Irish bishop and clergy ; for St. Colman was so discontented with the decision, that "he resigned this see of Lindisfarne, and returned to "his home in Ireland, taking along with him all the "Irish monks." p. 282.

I now come, in the 4th place, to a still further proof, that the supremacy of Rome was not acknowledged by the Irish church, even at the period I have been last speaking of; which, let it be remembered, was so late as the year 633, and more than two centuries after the alleged arrival of St. Patrick. The venerable Bede is again our authority—in speaking of Oswin, the king of Northumberland, already mentioned, he uses these remarkable words,—"Intellexerat "enim veraciter Oswi, QUAMVIS educatus a Scotis, "quia Romana esset Catholica et Apostolica ecclesia." "For Oswin truly understood, ALTHOUGH he was "educated by the Scots, how the Church of Rome

* The style of Honorius to the Irish clergy was *exhorting* them—"exhortans"—that they would not continue to celebrate Easter, "contrary to paschal computations, and the "Synodal decrees of the *Bishops of the whole world*."—Bede, lib. 2. c. 19.

" was Catholic and Apostolic"—(lib. 3. c. 29.) unquestionably implying, that a contrary opinion was more likely to be imbibed from an Irish education. But again, the same undoubted authority has preserved, and presented us with a letter, written A.D. 609, and directed from Laurentius, Mellitus, & Justus, who had been sent from Rome to England to assist Austin, " to the Scots *that inhabit Ireland.*" In this letter they write thus—" But knowing the Britons, " we thought that the Scots were better than they. " But we have learned by Bishop Daganus coming " into this island, and Columbanus, the abbot, coming " into France, that these differ nothing from the Britons " in their conversation. For Bishop Daganus, coming " unto us, would not only not eat with us, but not " so much as eat his meat in the house where we " were." To this remarkable passage you have referred in your 270th page ; but it is not so quoted as to be applicable, with all its real bearings, to the subject now in controversy between us. I would make the following very material use of it here. It declares that the British and Irish churches agreed with each other in this matter ; the mode, therefore, in which Austin's efforts to press upon the Britons the supreme authority of the court of Rome were received will, while it is instructive and interesting to detail, demonstrate clearly what were the opinions on that subject with which the Irish so fully sympathised. I shall take the account from Stapleton's Translation of Bede, printed at St. Omer's, A.D. 1622, lib. 11. c. 2. The British priests, assembled in a Synod, had

acknowledged the preaching of Austin to be the true way of righteousness; "But yet, they said, that "they could not alter and change their old customs "and ordinances, without the consent of their clergy "and people"—a remarkable circumstance, by the way—"they desired, therefore, that they might "have a second synod of a greater multitude." Previously to this second meeting, it had been agreed by the British bishops and clergy, to form their opinions of Austin and his mission from his demeanour towards them; he was permitted to enter first into the place where the synod were to meet, and they, on entering, were thus to judge of him, according to the following advice. "If, when ye "approach near, he ariseth courteously to you, think "ye he is the servant of Christ, and so hear ye him "obediently; but if he despise you, nor will vouch-"safe to rise at *your* presence, which are the more "in number, let him likewise be despised of you: "and truly so did they. For it happened that, when "they came thither, St. Austin was already there, "and sat in his chair; which, when they saw, straight "waxing wroth, they noted him of pride; and there-"fore endeavoured to overthwart and gainsay what-"soever he proposed." He told them that, "if "they would agree with Rome, in the time of "Easter, the ministerie of baptisme according to the "Roman church," &c.; "all your other ceremo-"nies, rites, fashions and customes, *though they be* "*contrary to ours*, yet we will willingly suffer them." But they answered, "that they would doe none of

" the things requested, neither would they compte " him for their archbishop ; saying with themselves— " nay, if he would not so much as rise to us, truelie, " the more we should now subjecte ourselves to him, " the more would he hereafter despise us, and set us " at naught." In consequence of this Austin departed, denouncing against them the vengeance of heaven ; which afterwards was, as Bede informs us, fully wreaked on them by Edilfred, an English prince, when " foule slaughter of this unfaithfull and naughty " people took place." " It is reported," says the historian, "That there were slaine in the warre, of them " which came to praie, about 2,200 men ; and only " fiftie to have escaped by flight "—these were the priests and others of the British church, who thus resisted unto death the arrogant attempts that were in this manner made, to impose upon them the supremacy of Rome. I cannot resist copying here a document, which can be found in the original Welch language, among the Concilia of Wilkins, v. 1. p. 26. It is styled in Latin " Responsio Abbatis " Bangor ad Augustinum monachum, petentem subjec- " tionem Ecclesiæ Romanæ." " The answer of the " Abbot of Bangor, to Austin the monk, seeking sub- " jection to the Church of Rome." " Be it known, " and without doubt unto you, that we all are, and " every one of us, obedient and servants to the church " of God, and to the Pope of Rome, and to every " true Christian and godly, to love every one in his " degree, in charity perfect ; and to help every one " of them by word and deed, to be the children

" of God ; *and other obedience than this I do not* " *know due to him whom you name to be Pope*, nor " to be the father of fathers, to be claimed and to be " demanded ; and this obedience we are ready to " give and to pay to him, and to every Christian " continually. *Besides, we are under the government* " *of the Bishop of Caerlion upon Usk*, who is to " oversee under God over us, to cause us to keep " the way spiritual." Such were the meek Christians who were thus cruelly butchered, through the influence of a proud bigot—And who, after perusing these documents, would not sympathise with Taliessin, the ancient bard of the Britons, in his zealous strain, written shortly after this period—there is no one, my dear sir, who ought to respond to it more loudly and more fervently than yourself—a warm proclaimer of liberty in national song—

Wo be to that priest yborne,
That will not cleanly weed his corne,
And preach his charge among ;
Wo be to that shepheard, (I say,)
That will not watch his fold alway,
As to his office doth belong ;
Wo be to him that doth not keepe
From Romish wolves his sheepe,
With staffe and weapon strong. *

I feel, therefore, that Archbishop Usher was fully justified in alleging the independence of the ancient

* Chronicle of Wales, p. 264.

Irish church; and that his judgment on that subject was founded on facts, established upon testimony in every respect unexceptionable, and which could not be mistaken. To this I must add, although I do not use it as an argument, that similar is the impression made by them upon the minds of our best modern writers of Ecclesiastical History; for instance Mosheim, who writes thus (Ecc. Hist. p. 2, c. 2.)—"The ancient Britons "and Scots persisted long in the maintenance of their "religious liberty; and neither the threats, nor the "promises, of the legates of Rome, could engage them "to submit to the decrees and authority of the "ambitious Pontiff; as appears manifestly from the "testimony of Bede"—and Milner, who says, "that "attempts were made all this time, by the bishops of "Rome, to induce the Irish to unite themselves to "the English church"—meaning that of Austin—"but in vain." He fixes the year 716 at the period when "this people were reduced to the Romish "communion."—See also Godwin de Præsul. p. 14, Spotiswood, and others.

There are some other facts in the history of the Irish church, connected with its independence, which I feel that it would be wrong to omit. You have referred to a Latin poem of St. Secundinus (p. 227); "of whose authenticity some able critics have seen "no reason whatever to doubt"—he was nephew of St. Patrick, and died A. D. 448. This poem * was written in honour of the saint; and he is spoken of

* See Patr. opuscula, p. 146.

in it thus—"Constans in Dei timore, et fide immo-"bilis; super quem œdificatur ut Petrum ecclesia." —"He is constant in the fear of God, and steadfast "in the faith; upon whom the church is builded, as "upon Peter." St. Patrick is called Papa or Pope, a name common in these times to all bishops, by Cummianus, in the letter so often alluded to. The see of Armagh is also called the apostolic city in the Book of Armagh; and by Marianus Scotus, so late as the year 1014. Much more upon this subject will be found collected together in Usher's religion of the ancient Irish, at the end of the 7th chapter, and in his sylloge. One of the letters in that collection, (p. 96), is an epistle addressed to Murchardach, king of Ireland, by Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, so late as the twelfth century; and in it this expression occurs—"Item dicitur, Episcopos in terrâ "vestrâ *passim* eligi."—"It is also said, that the "bishops in your land are *every where* elected." This remnant of independence continued thus long. St. Bernard in his life of Malachy (c. 11.) informs us, that this prelate was grieved, that Ireland had never yet received an archbishop's Pall from Rome—"Usque adhuc pallio caruisse"—and the first were sent over here A. D. 1151. We are informed that the first archbishop of Armagh that was appointed by papal provision was Egan Mac Gillividir, in the year 1206; and this was only on the opportunity that offered of deciding a contested election—even so it would not have been attempted, were not the dastardly John upon the

British throne; and, still further, it became necessary to purchase the consent of that mean prince, by a gift to him of 300 marks of silver, and 3 of gold. See the account of this prelate in Harris' Ware.

Finally, no such claim as that of the supremacy exercised by the present See of Rome could have existed, or been put forward, until above a century after the decease of St. Patrick, who "died on the 17th of March, 465," (p. 226); and for this plain reason, that the pope had not himself assumed the title of Catholic, or universal bishop until some years after: upon this subject there can be no doubt. There are extant letters written, A. D. 591, or thereabouts, by the Pope Gregory I. entitled the Great, condemning John, Bishop of Constantinople, for assuming that title—(See Greg.Epis. lib. iv. Epis. 76, 82, and 78); in the latter of these, addressed to the Empress Constantia, the prelate expresses himself in the following very remarkable terms:—

"Sed cum se, novâ præsumptione atque superbiâ, idem frater meus *universum episcopum* appellet,—(ita ut, sanctæ memoriæ decessoris mei tempore, adscribi se in synodo tali hoc superbo vocabulo faceret, quamvis cuncta acta illius synodi, sede contradicente Apostolicâ, soluta sint,)—triste mihi aliquid Serenissimus Dominus innuit, quod non eum corripuit, qui superbit; sed me magis ab intentione mea declinare studuit, qui in hâc causâ, Evangeliorum et canonum statuta, humilitatis atque rectitudinis virtute, defendo. Triste autem valdé est, ut patienter feratur, quatenus, despectis omnibus, prædictus frater et coepiscopus

meus solus conetur appellari episcopus. *Sed in hoc ejus superbiâ quid aliud nisi* propinqua jam ANTICHRISTI esse tempora designatur? Quia videlicet imitatur qui, spretis in sociali guadio angelorum legionibus, ad culmen conatus est singularitatis erumpere dicens—super astra cœli exaltabo solium meum, sedebo in monte testamenti, in lateribus áquilonis, et ascendam super altitudinem nubium, et ero similis Altissimo."

"But when this my same brother, with a novel "presumption and pride, calls himself 'Catholic "Bishop,'—(so as to cause himself, in the time of my "predecessor of holy memory, to be addressed in a "synod by that proud name, although all the acts of "that synod, the Apostolical See being against them, "be dissolved,)—His Most Serene Highness," (the Emperor,) "gave me some sorrow, in that he did not "correct him who had thus arrogated, but rather "studiously tried to turn me the more from my "intention—me, who in this cause defend the ordi-"nances of the gospels and the canons, for the "sake of humility and rectitude. But it is a very "lamentable thing, that he should patiently permit so "far, that, in contempt of all others, this my *brother* "and *fellow* bishop should endeavour to be called *sole* "bishop. But indeed what else is manifested in this "his pride, but that the times of ANTICHRIST are "nigh at hand, even now? Because, forsooth, he "is imitated, who, scorning social bliss among legions "of angels, strove to break forth to the height of "singularity, saying, (Isaiah, xiv. 13,)—'I will exalt

" ' my throne above the stars of Heaven—I will sit in
" ' the mountain of the covenant—in the sides of the
" ' North—I will ascend above the height of the
" ' clouds—I will be like to the Most High.' "

At this very time, however, the title seems to have been coveted by Gregory himself; and we have already seen how his claim to it was urged, by Austin and his agents in Britain, very shortly afterwards; but it was not confirmed to the Pope, until the Emperor Phocas conferred it upon him, A. D. 606. This is a fact well known, and universally admitted; at all events it is quite manifest, that the superior authority belonging to Catholic or universal Bishop, could not have been claimed by Rome, or acknowledged, before the year 591—the date of the above-mentioned letters.

But, even if such honor should have been paid to Rome as you contend, and that disputes had been referred to her for decision, it would go no farther than to prove a choice of that See, as arbiter; and such a choice might, at this early period, have been with the utmost propriety made, considering the very different spirit that animated the pontiffs of Rome, during the first centuries of the Christian æra, and even down to the pontificate of Gregory I. I shall gladly here transcribe the candid confession of Archbishop Usher, (Relig. &c. p. 87,) as being perfectly in unison with my own sentiments on the point. " This I will say, that, as it is most likely that St. " Patrick had a special regard unto the church of " Rome, from whence he was sent for the conversion " of the island; so, if I myself had lived in his daies,

"for the resolution of a doubtful question, I should "as willingly have listened to the judgment of the "church of Rome, as to the determination of any "church in the whole world; so reverend an esti- "mation have I of the integretie of that church, as it "stood in those good daies. But that St. Patrick "was of opinion, that the church of Rome was sure "ever afterwards to continue in that good estate, and "that there was a perpetual privilege annexed unto "that See, that it should never erre in judgement; "or that the Pope's sentences were always to be held "as infallible oracles; that I will never believe: "*sure I am that my countrymen after him were of* "*farre other beleefe*, who were so farre from sub- "mitting themselves in this sort to whatsoever should "proceed from the See of Rome, that *they oftentimes* "*stood out against it, when they had little cause so* "*to doe*."

The next subject that you mention is put forward in the following words,—"That they," the Christians of the primitive Irish church, "celebrated mass under "the ancient traditional names of the holy mysteries "of the eucharist, the sacrifice of salvation, the immo- "lation of the host, is admitted by Usher himself. "But he might have found language still stronger "employed by them, to express the mystery their "faith acknowledged in that rite."—To this is added in a note,*—"Following the belief of the ancient

* In another note to the words "sacrifice of salvation," you have thus observed,—"The phrase used by St. Chrysostom,

" church, as to a real presence in the sacrament, they " adopted the language also by which this mystery " was expressed; and the phrase of ' making the body " of Christ,' which occurs so frequently in the litur- " gies of the primitive church, is found likewise in the " writings of the first Irish Christians. Thus Adamnan,

" in speaking of the progress of the faith in the British isles, " implies in itself, that the belief held in those regions respecting " the Eucharist was the very same which he himself enforced in " his writings, and which the Catholic church maintains to the " present day. " They have erected churches," (says the saint,) " and altars of sacrifice." But it will not be expected that I should here diverge into comments on this note; for, besides that it would lead me into a very extended and unnecessary digression, to prove that, even were it here implied that the eucharist of the British churches " was the very same which he him- " self enforced by his writings," it by no means follows that it is that " which the Catholic church maintains to the present day," but very far different—all that is important on the subject will be presented in commenting on your text. I shall, therefore, only observe, that I presume that the passage which you have quoted from St. Chrysostom, is one which we have already noticed. The expressions which he there makes use of are these—*καὶ θυσιαστήρια πεπήγασιν*; which, while it may be properly construed, "and they erected altars of sacrifice," by no means implies any thing of doctrine respecting the Eucharist, such as " the Catholic church maintains to the present day"—nothing of transubstantiation, nothing of immolation—but rather what is intended by the following verses; in Psalm 50, verse 14—"Offer unto God thanksgiving, and pay " thy vows unto the Most High;" or, in Psalm 116, verses 13 and 17—" I will take the cup of salvation—I will " offer to thee the sacrifice of salvation, and call upon the name " of the Lord." Allow me also to remark, that I am much surprised that, when you referred to St. Chrysostom for the character of Christian doctrine in Ireland, you did not at once perceive, that his evidence ought to have settled the question of the introduction of Christianity into this country, and the establishment of churches there, previously to his decease, which took place A.D. 407.

"in his life of St. Columba, tells us of that saint "ordering the Bishop Cronan, 'Christi corpus ex "more conficere,' Lib. 1. c. 44. In later Irish "writers numerous passages to the same purport may "be found; but, confining myself to those only of the "earlier period, I shall add but the following strong "testimony from Sedulius:—

"Corpus, sanguis, aqua; tria vitæ munera nostræ:
"Fonte renacentes, membris et sanguine Christi
"Vescimur, atque ideo templum Deitatis habemur:
"Quod servare Deus nos annuat immaculatum,
"Et faciat tenues tanto Mansore capaces."
Car. Paschale Lib. iv.

Before I enter upon this important subject I must observe, and it should be particularly noted, that it is so intimately connected with a difference of meaning, attached by different individuals to the same terms, that it is quite necessary to inquire what signification was in the mind of those whom we assert to agree with others, before we can be at all certain of that agreement being any thing more than the use of the same terms. Thus the real presence of Christ in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is holden by most churches; but in one sense by the Roman Catholic, and in another essentially different by the Protestant so that it becomes necessary to inquire what Usher intended to signify, when he used the words sacrifice, mass, host, and others.

I must likewise, before entering into the argument, again complain of the vague manner in which you quote your authorities; in a case where your assertions

implicating a writer such as Usher, required surely to be supported by a very particular reference, ere they could be at all admitted by the intelligent part of the public. Is it fair that we should be put upon the examination of that learned man's voluminous works, or those eight volumes of St. Chrysostom, in order that we might with safety affirm, that they have *no where* spoken in the exact manner that you have said; and why have you not presented us with even one of "the liturgies of the Primitive church," or a part of one, by which we might try the truth of the allegation you so confidently advance? Here again I am forced to the proof of a negative; but here also I fear not to allege, that Usher makes, in the spirit of its meaning, no such admission as you attribute to him; that no liturgy of the primitive church in Ireland, within two centuries of St. Patrick's arrival, makes use of the phrase that you have quoted, nor do the writings of its early teachers; and that one, whose authority upon this occasion you must acknowledge to be decisive, takes the same view as the articles of the Church of England of this great question—in fine, that the present Roman Catholic tenets respecting it are adverse, not only to the opinions of Usher, and the early Irish Christians, but to that of the primitive church in general, and the Bible.

I presume that the following is the admission of the archbishop to which you allude—and let me remark that he is writing of Adamnanus, A.D. 700; and of what took place at the obsequies of Columbanus, A.D. 615; neither of which dates are entirely

primitive—but I do not press this point—"In Adam-
"nanus," he says, (Relig. &c. p. 35.) "the sacred
"ministerie of the Eucharist and the solemnities of
"the Masse are taken for the same thing. So like-
"wise, in the relation of the passages that concerne
"the obsequies of Columbanus, we finde, that Missam
"celebrare et Missam agere, is made to be the same
"with divina celebrare mysteria, et salutis hostiam, (or
"salutare sacrificium,) immolare—the saying of
"Masse, the same with the celebration of the
"divine mysteries, and the oblation of the healthful
"sacrifice; for by that terme was the administration
"of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper at that time
"usually designed."

Now the important matter for us here to determine is, what meaning Usher affixed to these terms; and, had you thought fit to have laid before your readers all that he has said in the place referred to, that signification would have appeared as clearly as light; for he particularly remarks, that he applied a very different meaning to the terms thus employed by him, from that affixed to them by *modern Romanists.* He proceeds, immediately after the sentences already quoted, thus—"FOR, as in our beneficence, (Heb. 13.
"16.) and communicating to the necessities of the
"poore, (which are sacrifices with which God
"is well pleased,) wee are taught to give both our
"selves and our almes first unto the Lord, and after to
"our brethren by the will of God; so is it in this
"ministry of the blessed sacrament; the service is
"first presented to God, (from which the sacrament

" it selfe is called the Eucharist, because therein wee " offer a speciall sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving " to God,) and then communicated unto the use of " God's people. In the performance of which part " of the service, both the minister was said to *give*, " and the communicant to *receive the sacrifice* ; " as well as, in respect to the former part, they were " said to *offer* the same unto the Lord. For they " did not distinguish the sacrifice from the sacrament, " AS THE ROMANISTS DO NOW-A-DAYS ; but used " the name of sacrifice indifferently, both of that " which was *offered* unto God, and of that which " was *given* to, and *received* by the communicant. " Therefore we read of *offering the sacrifice unto* " *God—of giving the sacrifice to man—and of* " *receiving the sacrifice from the hands of that* " *minister* ; as in that sentence of the synod attributed " unto St. Patrick, ' He who deserveth not to " receive the sacrament in his life, how can it helpe " him after his death ? Whereby it doth appear, " that *the sacrifice of the elder times was* NOT *like* " *unto the new Masse of the* ROMANISTS.' " I presume that it is now sufficiently manifest, that archbishop Usher has not made any admission at all consonant with the meaning that you have attributed to him ; and certainly nothing could be farther from his intention, or from that of the ancient Irish Christians whom he quotes, or refers to, than the coupling of the great modern mystery of transubstantiation, or the equally modern doctrine of the actual sacrifice in the Mass of the body of Christ,

with the "ancient traditional names of the holy "mysteries of the Eucharist, the sacrifice of salvation, "and the immolation of the host."

With respect to the liturgies of the primitive church—if you mean the Irish church, I have never seen or heard of, nor do I know or believe that there exist, any that contain the sentence which you say "occurs so frequently" in them; and if you intend by them those ancient ones of the foreign Roman Catholics, we have nothing to do with them here.

I proceed to the writings of the first Irish Christians. I cannot prove a negative; I can only challenge you, and I do so with great confidence, to produce one sentence from them, of an earlier date than our limit of A.D. 600, in which "the phrase of making the "body of Christ" occurs—you have given us no instance; for Adamnan was a writer of the year 700, or thereabouts. But you say, that "In LATER Irish "writers numerous passages to the same purport may "may be found"—I fully admit this to be probable, but they make nothing to our question. You conclude with saying that, "confining yourself to those only "of the earlier period," you will add the "strong "testimony" of Sedulius; then follow five verses from the Carmen Paschale of that poet, in which there is not one word of "the making of the body "of Christ;" and whether they be "to the same "purport," or not, depends upon the opinion which he had of the presence of Christ in the sacrament, and of the manner in which communicants feed upon His body and blood. In order to explain the views of

Sedulius upon this subject, it is to be regretted that you did not let him also, as well as Usher, speak more fully for himself, and that you withheld from us the following verses, which occur in the same poem from which you quoted the five former ones. (lib. 4.)

> Denique Pontificium princeps, summusque sacerdos,
> Quis nisi Christus adest ? gemini libaminis author ;
> Ordine Melchisedech, cui dantur munera semper
> Quæ sua sunt, segetis fructus, et gaudia vitis.

Here it is said, as every Christian believer must hold, that Christ, "the prince of pontiffs and great "High Priest," is present in the sacrament; but whether spiritually or corporeally in the mind of Sedulius will appear from the sequel, where he calls our Lord "the author of the double libation ; of the order of "Melchisedech ; to whom are always *given* gifts "which are his own—the fruit of the corn, and the "delights of the vine."—Here surely there must be a strange transubstantiating power operating in the imagination, before we can discover either truly really and substantially, the body and blood of Christ ; or indeed in any way a sacrifice of Him, whether bloody or unbloody ; but solely that offering of "the sacrifice of thanksgiving," of which Usher speaks ; and which was rendered by the devout believers, in obedience to their dying Lord's command, "*Do this in* REMEMBRANCE *of me.**

* The sentiments of the Irish divines upon this subject continued to a late period unchanged by the innovations of the

But I have promised to advance the authority upon the subject of one, whose opinion you will acknowledge to be decisive, at least where you are party to a controversy—I must introduce him to the public, although he is already well known to *your* readers. In writing of John Scotus Erigena, in your 305th page, where you mention his denial of the real presence, you express yourself thus—"In stating, "however, as he is said to have done, that the "sacrament of the Eucharist is not the 'true body "and true blood,' he might have had reference solely "to the doctrine put forth then recently by Paschasius "Radbert, who maintained that the body present in "the Eucharist was the same carnal and palpable "body which was born of the Virgin, which suffered "on the cross, and rose from the dead; whereas the "*belief of the Catholic church*, on this point of "doctrine, has ALWAYS been, that the body of "Christ is under the symbols, not corporeally, or "carnally, but in a spiritual manner." And to this you have added, in a note—"Thus explained, in "perfect consonance, as he says, with the doctrine "of the council of Trent, by the celebrated missionary

modern Roman Catholics—Claudius, one of the founders of the University of Paris, and an Irishman, expresses himself thus, about the year 815—"Because bread doth confirm "the body, and wine doth work blood in the flesh, therefore "the one is MYSTICALLY referred to the body of Christ, "the other to his blood."—And Henry Crumpe, a monk of Baltinglass, A. D. 1384, says—"The body of Christ in the "sacrament of the altar *is only a looking-glass to the body* of "Christ in heaven." (Ush. Rel. &c. p. 43.)

" Verron :—' Ergo corpus Christi, seu Christus, est " in symbolis, spirituali modo seu spiritualiter, et non " corporali seu carnali, nec corporaliter seu car-' naliter.' Regula fid. Cath. c. 2. §. 11."

You are therefore, yourself, sir, in this sentence, the authority by which we shall decide this point. Believe me I do not mean merely to jest ; I think it quite clear, either that you do not understand the subject upon which you write, or are ignorant of what Protestants assert in their protests concerning it. You have stated what you allege to have *always* been the belief of the Catholic church, and of course, in your opinion, to have been that also of the early Christian church, founded by St. Patrick in Ireland— but far from denying the fact, that the early Irish Christians did think thus of the Eucharist, it is my great object to prove it.

We are therefore agreed in every thing but one, and that is, that I think this doctrine to be exactly that of the modern Protestant, while you consider it to be precisely that of the now Roman Catholic church. This part of the question, however, is easily decided ; and a placing together of the several views, will enable the simplest reader to form an immediate judgment for himself. Concerning the doctrine " of the real presence in the Eucharist"—

What has " always been " in your judgment, " the belief of the Catholic church " in Ireland.— " That the body of Christ is, under the symbols, " not corporeally, or carnally, but in a SPIRITUAL " manner." p. 305.

28th Article of the Church of England—"To "such as rightly, worthily, and with faith, re- "ceive the same, the bread which we break is a "partaking of the body of Christ; and likewise the "cup of blessing is a partaking of the blood of "Christ."—*The body of Christ is taken, and eaten in "the supper*, ONLY *after an heavenly and* SPIRITUAL "MANNER."

"Ita definit Concilium Tridentinum, Sess. 13 "can 1." the Council of Trent thus decides—"Si "quis negaverit in sanctissimæ Eucharistæ sacra- "mento contineri, veré realiter et substantialiter, "corpus et sanguinem, unâ cum animâ et Divinitate "Domini nostri Jesu Christi, ac proinde totum "Christum; sed dixerit tantummodo esse in eo, ut in "signo, vel figurâ, aut virtute—anathema sit."

"If any one shall deny that there is contained "in the sacrament of the most holy Eucharist, *truly*, "*really*, and SUBSTANTIALLY, THE BODY AND "BLOOD, together with the soul and divinity of our "Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore the entire Christ; "*but shall say that they are only in it as in a sign or* "*figure*, or virtually—let him be accursed."

See Den's Theology, V. v. p. 278. Ed. Dub. 1832. N. 20. De reali Christi præsentia," &c.

It is quite unnecessary to make any further comment here; but it surely does afford some proof of the folly of this tenet, that it presents itself to a mind intelligent as yours, in such a manner, that you cannot but couple it with the idea of heresy. The doctrine of transubstantiation is indeed one, as Dean Swift says, "the

"belief of which makes every thing else unbelievable"—one that alters the very character of miracle, which is to testify to the senses, and thus to prepare the mind by the divine operations exhibited to them, for the reception in faith of divine truths which are revealed, and which the exercise of reason merely could never enable man to acquire. But this doctrine commences with silencing the evidence of the senses altogether; nay further, commands us to believe against their testimony—and what then is the matter of faith thus forced upon the mind?—a doctrine contradictory to sense, repugnant to reason, and inconsistent with the entire tenor of the revelation of God's Word.

It remains now shortly to shew, that the doctrine of the modern Roman Catholics on this subject is not only contrary to Usher's, and to yours, and to that of the primitive Irish Christians, but to that of the early church in general, and to the Bible.

Of the doctrine of transubstantiation, as respects other parts of Christendom, Erasmus (in 1 Cor. vii.) says thus, "In synaxi Transubstantionem serò "definivit Ecclesia;" nor was it introduced into any church, until the second council of Nice, A.D. 787.

There is a very remarkable testimony on this subject given by a Roman Pontiff, Gelasius, about the year 476; whose work "De duabus naturis contra Eutychium," is printed in Bib. Pat. Ludg, 1677, T. viii. p. 703. He there expresses himself thus—"Certè sacra-"mentum sumimus corporis et sanguinis Christi; divina "res est, propter quod, et per eadem, divinæ efficimur

" consortes naturæ ; et tamen esse non desinit sub-
" stantia vel natura panis et vini"—though, by taking the sacrament, " we are made to become partakers " of the divine nature, yet, notwithstanding, it *does* " *not cease to be the substance or nature of bread and* " *wine*"—he adds " et certè imago et similitudo cor-
" poris et sanguinis Christi, in actione mysteriorum " celebrantur."

With respect to the record of highest antiquity and authority, the Scriptures, transubstantiation is allowed to be entirely without warrant from them ; except so far as is implied from that construction of the term *is*, in the sentence, " This *is* my body," which makes it to have a literal signification—a construction which would equally convert, " truly, really, " and substantially," our blessed Lord into a door, (John x. 7.) or a vine, (John xv. 1.) ; the stars and candlesticks of the book of Revelation, into angels and churches ; the ears of corn and kine of Pharaoh's dream into years ; the very cup in the passage before us into the New Testament ; or any other emblem which is mentioned in the Bible, according to the idiom of its original languages, by the terms *is* or *am*, into the thing itself which it is thus said to represent. The parable of the tares will present the best example of the absurdity and ignorance of this ; read our Saviour's exposition of its meaning, as you will find it in St. Matthew—(c. xiii. v. 37, &c.)—" He " that soweth the good seed *is* the Son of man ; the " field *is* the world ; the good seed *are* the children " of the kingdom, but the tares are the children of " the wicked one ; the enemy that sowed them *is* the

devil; the harvest *is* the end of the world; and the "reapers *are* the angels."*

Transubstantiation and the sacrifice of the Mass are totally at variance with Scripture; being without blood, the latter contradicts Heb. ix. 22—"without "shedding of blood is no remission;" and also *v.* 12, &c. and 1 John i. 7: and both reject the following important passages in the Epistle to the Hebrews, (ix. 24, &c., x. 10, &c.)—"Christ is not entered "into the holy places *made with hands, which are* "*the figures of the true; but into heaven itself,* now "to appear in the presence of God for us: nor "yet that he should OFFER HIMSELF OFTEN." And again—"We are sanctified through the offering of "the *body* of Jesus Christ ONCE FOR ALL. And "every priest standeth daily ministering, and offer-"ing oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never "take away sins: but this Man, after he had offered "*one* sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right "hand of God; from henceforth expecting till his "enemies be made his footstool. FOR, BY ONE

* Strange to say, Fisher, Roman Catholic bishop of Rochester, seems to consider the words of Scripture to be against this doctrine, and that it can only be maintained on the authority of the Fathers. (Fisher de capt. Babil. c. 10.) "Dixi-"mus majorem habendam esse fidem usui diuturno quem a "primis ipsis patribus Ecclesia certò traditum confidit, quàm "nudis ipsis Evangelii verbis"—and again—"ejus certitudo" —viz.:—"sacerdotem veram Christi carnem et sanguinem "consecrare"—non tàm habeatur ex verbo Evangelii, quàm "ex patrum interpretatione." What would Pope Gelasius or Erasmus have said to this? Or how is it to be reconciled with all that has been urged, of the most strictly literal interpretation being necessary to those who uphold the real and corporeal presence.

" OFFERING, HE HATH PERFECTED FOR EVER *them that are sanctified.*"

The third head of doctrine you notice thus—" The " ancient practice of offering up *prayers for the* " *dead,** and the belief of a middle state of existence " after this life upon which that practice is founded, " formed also parts of their creed ; though of the " locality of the purgatorial fire their notions were, " like those of the ancient fathers, vague and unde- " fined. In an old life of St. Brendan, who lived in " the sixth century, it is stated, the prayer of the " living doth much profit the dead ; and among the " canons of a very early Irish synod, there is one " entitled ' Of Oblation for the Dead." Of the " frequent practice, indeed, of prayer and alms-giving " for the relief of departed souls, there are to be " found throughout the records of those times abun- " dant proofs. In a tract attributed to Cummian, " who lived in the seventh century, and of whose " talent and learning we shall hereafter have occasion

* You have here the following note, quoting from Tertullian—" Oblationes pro defunctis annuâ die facimus."—Of this passage I must remark, that as it relates to the practice of the church out of Ireland, and one too condemned expressly by a canon of an Irish synod, it proves nothing for the case you are advocating ; I shall, therefore, dismiss it briefly with two remarks—the first, that you have not quoted it fully ; it is thus in the original—" Oblationes pro defunctis, pro natalitiis " annuâ die facimus." The second is that, as is the case of St. Chrysostom, since you have chosen to produce the testimony of Tertullian to a matter of fact, you must allow me to claim him to be a witness above exception, where I produce him to prove the introduction of Christianity into Ireland previously to the year 200.

" to speak, propitiatory masses for the dead are men-
" tioned." And in a note—" It is acknowledged by
" Usher, that Requiem masses were among the re-
" ligious practices of the Irish Christians in those
" days; but he denies that they were any thing more
" than 'an honorable commemoration of the dead, and
" a sacrifice of thanksgiving for their salvation.' It
" has been shewn clearly, however, that these masses
" were meant to be also, in the strongest sense of the
" word, propitiatory. In an old Irish missal, found at
" Bobbio, of which an account has been given in the
" Rev. Hibern. Script. (Ep. Nunc. cxxxviii.) there is
" contained a mass for the dead, entitled, 'Pro De-
" functis;' in which the following prayer, and others
" no less Catholic, are to be found:—'Concede pro-
" pitiùs, ut hæc sacra oblatio mortuis prosit ad veniam,
" et vivis proficiat ad salutem.' "

Upon this article I have much and most important matter to produce; but, previously, I must disencumber it from a great deal that does not properly belong to the question, as it is at issue between us; and disentangle it from some expressions which you call admissions of Archbishop Usher, and with which you have improperly interwoven it.

And, in the first place, we must get rid of the " Old " life of St. Brendan, who lived in the sixth century;" because that this life was not only written long after the year 600, but is so replete with absurdities, that it would be insulting to your understanding, and quite lowering to our subject, to transcribe them. Its authority is at once put aside by the just censure of

Molanus, a learned Romanist, who declares, "that "there be many apocryphal fooleries in it."

In the next place, we must disencumber ourselves of the tract of St. Cummian; principally because he also is a late authority, having written it in the seventh century; and likewise, because you have left us in doubt where to find that tract, in order to examine its contents; and have not quoted its contents—besides all this, St. Cummianus, notwithstanding his celebrated epistle to Segienus, and in despite of "his talents and learning," which you so frequently allude to, was capable of swallowing and digesting many *fooleries* also—take the following specimen from the above mentioned letter—(Syl. p. 34.) "Et nos, in reliquiis sanctorum martyrum, "et Scripturis quas attulerunt, probavimus inesse "virtutem Dei. Vidimus, oculis nostris, puellam "cæcam omninò *ad has* RELIQUIAS oculos aperien-"tem, et paralyticum ambulantem, et multa de-"monia ejecta." "I myself saw a blind girl opening "her eyes at the relics of holy martyrs!" &c. St. Cummian, therefore, proves too much, except for the disciples of Prince Hohenloe.

And we must also disencumber the argument of the old Irish missal found at Bobbio; you state (p. 265) that that monastery was established there by St. Columbanus, shortly before the year 615; and in a note to the next page, you adduce the opinion of O'Connor, that this missal had "been brought "from Luxenil to Bobbio, by some followers of St. "Columbanus," in the seventh century, it is there-

fore too modern for us ; and its authority also cannot properly be acquiesced in without some opportunity afforded us of examining the original passages and their contents. Add to this, that it is not a purely Irish authority, and that its authenticity has been matter of dispute.—See O'Connor Ep. Nunc.

It is necessary, likewise, that I should explain the alleged admissions of Usher ; and as upon a former occasion, to restore his evidence to its fulness. I find that you have, with great injustice to his reasoning, withheld the most important portion of his words, and some of them not even divided by a comma from those which you have thought proper to transcribe—they are as follows—" *Whereby it* " *appeareth that* an honourable commemoration of " the dead was herein intended, and a sacrifice of " thanksgiving for their salvation, *rather than of pro-* " *pitiation for their sinnes.*"—You should not only have left this sentence entire ; but have also mentioned the occasion of Usher's thus expressing himself, and to which he refers by the word " Whereby." He introduces the paragraph thus—(Rel. of Ant. Ir. p. 27.) " And this is a thing very observable, in " the antienter lives of the Saints, (such I mean, as " have beene written before the time of Sathan's " loosing, beyond which wee doe not now looke ;) " that the prayers and oblations for the dead men- " tioned therein, are expressly noted to have been " made for them whose soules were SUPPOSED at the " same instant *to* HAVE RESTED *in blisse.*"—The very reverse of the REQUIEM MASS of modern days—

he then adduces some examples, and concludes with the words, " Whereby," &c., which you have chosen thus to abridge—I refer to his 28th and 29th pages for the rest of his argument, and shall return to the latter part of this again.

And here it should be particularly stated, as necessary to the full understanding of this subject, and for the reconciling of some of the apparent contradictions which involve it, that it has at all times been the practice of the Christian church to put up prayers—that the Lord would shortly accomplish the number of his elect, and hasten the time when he shall appear again in glory; remove the curse from off this earth; and complete the happiness of his redeemed. In these prayers the sainted dead are interested as well as others; for, until that period arrive, their bodies shall lie mouldering in the grave; and that state of perfect bliss be deferred, which consists in the reunion of the spirit, now in paradise, with their glorified bodies; according to that hope of the believer, thus expressed by St. Paul, when he speaks of " the earnest expectation of the creature," that the " creature itself also shall be delivered from " the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty " of the children of God "—and " we ourselves, " groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, " to wit, the redemption of our body"—(Rom. viii. 21. 23.)—and also when he writes thus—(1 Cor. xv. 51)—" Behold! I shew you a mystery—We " shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in " a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last

" trump—for the trumpet shall sound ; and the dead " shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall all be " changed. For this corruptible must put on incor- " ruption, and this mortal put on immortality." This it is which will form the consummation of God's all-glorious work of redemption ; fully completing the happiness of his people, and justifying his most righteous ways : and in it, as I have said, departed saints are clearly interested, and indeed, are particularly exhibited as being so in the book of Revelation (vi. 9.)—This consummation devoutly to be wished is, therefore, a legitimate subject for prayer, and was so in the primitive church ; and I am almost certain that some such meaning will be found properly to belong to the expressions of such writers as St. Chrysostom and St. Augustine, that are quoted and relied on as sanctioning prayer for the dead. I do find the following sentence, for instance, used by the former of these saints, in connection with the mention of similar prayers, and as defining their object—" ut et " illi et nos promissa consequemur bona"—" that " both they and we may obtain the good things " promised ;" and if we look to that place which you have quoted from Tertullian, (Ed. Par. 1641, Lib. xv. 66)—we shall meet with a direction to widows to make annual oblation for their husbands ; and prayer that, among other things, they should have " in primâ resurrectione consortium"—" a par- " taking together of the first resurrection." At all events, it will be impossible to find in any one of these fathers the slightest allusion to any thing

like a purgatorial fire. When the doctrine of prayer for the release of SOULS from the refining of a "PURGATORIAL FIRE," came to be artfully ingrafted on this stock, the entire grew wildly into error; and some Protestants, too hasty in their anxious zeal for the purifying of the church from erroneous innovation, have, in pruning the branches, come too near to the root. For this reason it is that we hear so little of this interesting subject, until very lately, in our Protestant prayers; save only in this beautiful one of the burial service of the Church of England—
"Almighty God, with whom do live the spirits of "them that depart hence in the Lord, and with "whom *the souls* of the faithful, after they are "delivered from the burden of the flesh, *are in joy* "*and felicity; we give* thee hearty *thanks* for that "it hath pleased thee to deliver this our brother "out of the miseries of this sinful world; beseeching "thee, that it may please thee, of thy gracious "goodness, shortly to accomplish the number of "thine elect, and to hasten thy kingdom; that "we, with all those who are departed in the true "faith of thy holy name, may have our *perfect con-*"*summation* and bliss, *both in body and soul*, in thy "eternal and everlasting glory, through Jesus Christ, "our Lord. Amen."

Connected with the subject of the "hearty thanks" here mentioned, are the oblations for the dead, of which Tertullian speaks thus—"We make annual "oblations for the dead, for their birth-days." These are thus explained in the sermon of Chrysologus on the martyrdom of Cyprian—"Do not think the

" birth-day of saints to be one *to* the earth in the " flesh; but from earth to heaven, from labour to " repose, from temptations to rest, from tortures to " delights, from the scorn of the world to the crown, " and to glory." St. Chrysostom, in his 4th Hom. in Heb. says also—" Do we not praise God and give " thanks, for that he hath now crowned him that is " departed." Such were these oblations for the dead.

I shall now proceed to demonstrate, that St. Patrick and the early Irish Christians had no idea of any thing like a purgatory, or a "purgatorial fire;" and that those doctrines are neither primitive nor scriptural, in the way in which they are now taught in the Roman Catholic church.

You are, of course, acquainted with the canons attributed to the synods of St. Patrick, which are commented on by yourself, (p. 225.) Now the words of this canon thus quoted, whose title, which is all that you have produced, appears to imply an acknowledgment of " Oblation for the dead," seem most unequivocally to oppose the doctrine as you explain it. The fact will appear from the document itself, which I shall transcribe in full. I find that this title is referred to, independently of the canon itself, in O'Connor's first index to his Rer. Hiber. Script., p. 258; and I suspect that, finding it there apparently suited to your system, you gave into the temptation, and took it upon conjecture, as you probably did in a similar manner the quotation from Tertullian, in order to save further research. The canon is—

" Chapter xii. De oblatione pro defunctis."

" Audi Apostolum dicentem—' Est autem pecca-

" tum ad mortem, non pro illo dico ut roget quis;' et " Dominus—' Nolite donare sanctum canibus'—Qui " enim in vitâ suâ sacrificium* non merebitur acci- " pere, quomodo post mortem illi poterit adjuvare?"

" Of oblation for the dead."

" Hear the apostle saying—' there is a sin unto " death, I do not say that one should pray for it;' " and our Lord—' Give not that which is holy unto " dogs'—for he who in his lifetime shall not deserve " to receive the sacrifice, how can it assist him after " death?"

Now, Sir, had you studied this canon with attention, and not copied the conclusions drawn from it by other prejudiced writers, you could not but have perceived that it is negative of something; and therefore it is most negligent, to say no more, to adduce it as implying a custom practised and approved: and had you also looked to the original Tertullian, you would have seen its clear meaning to be, that none but real believers could have any lot or part at their death in that spiritual offering of thanksgiving, that " oblatio pro defunctis pro natalitüs," which he mentions, and which is manifestly alluded to here. I must not omit, that there is among the works attributed to St. Patrick one upon the following subject: —" De tribus Habitaculis," and, in describing these, he says—" There be three habitations under the " power of Almighty God; the first, the lowermost,

* The meaning of the words "receiving the sacrifice," as used in these early days, has been already fully explained by a passage from Usher, transcribed under the next preceding head of doctrine.

"and the middle: the highest whereof is called the "kingdom of God, or the kingdom of the heavens; "the lowermost is termed hell; the middle is named "the present world." And again—"Either place "is supplied from the middle one." There is no mention of purgatory here, nor indeed in the entire tract, although its peculiar topic be the future condition of the soul; and this silence on the subject, while it distinctly proves that he does not inculcate the doctrine, affords a strong implication that it was never even heard of by the writer—there was nothing before him to suggest the thought of it to his mind; for, were it otherwise, he could not possibly, on such an occasion, have passed it by entirely unnoticed. I should make a similar remark upon another ancient canon, attributed to a synod of St. Patrick, although not so with any certainty, yet unquestionably of great antiquity. (See Us. Rel. &c. p. 24.) It speaks thus of the soul—"Neither can the archangel lead it to life, until "the Lord have judged it; nor the devil transport "it to hell, until the Lord have condemned it." I think that, had purgatory been a doctrine of those times, it could not have passed entirely unnoticed here. I would just add that St. Columbanus, in spite of the missal of Bobbio, directs his disciples thus (Syl. &c. p. 11):—

"Vive Deo fidens, Christi præcepta sequendo,
"Dummodó vita manet, dum tempora certa salutis."

"Live believing in God, following the precepts of

" Christ, *while life remains, while the times for obtain-*
" *ing salvation are certain ;*" which seems to me to exclude the idea of any such time after death, and in a purgatorial state : while the later Sedulius says, (in Rom. 7. and in 1. Cor. 3 ; from Us. Rel. &c. p. 24—) that, at the end of life, " either death or life suc-
" ceedeth ;" and " that, death is the gate by which
" we enter into the kingdom."

Claudius, whom I have mentioned before, has a very strong passage upon this subject. I do not, however, quote him on his own account, as you have not thought proper to mention him in your history, and, therefore, have not appeared to admit him as an authority ; but because he merely refers to the words of St. Jerome, one of the greatest and most ancient fathers of the Roman Catholic church ; and will therefore serve, fitly, to lead us from the consideration of this doctrine as holden by the early Irish Christians, to the views entertained of it by the rest of Christendom. He shews us the utter vanity of prayers for the releasing of souls out of purgatory, where he tells us, that, " While we are in this present world
" we may assist each other by prayers, or by counsels;
" but when we shall come before the tribunal of
" Christ, neither Job, nor Daniel, nor Noah can
" intreat for any one, but every one shall bear his
" own burden." This sentence from St. Jerome is remarkably similar to one upon the same subject, which is used by St. Clement, third Pope of Rome, in his Second Epistle written to the Corinthians, c. 3.

After quoting the same text from Ezek. xiv., 14. &c. respecting Noah, Daniel and Job, he says—" Let us " therefore repent, whilst we are yet upon the earth ; " for as the potter, if he make a vessel, and it be " turned amiss in his hands, or broken, again forms " it anew ; but if he have gone so far as to throw it " into the furnace of fire, he can no more bring any " remedy of it ; so we, whilst we are in this world, " should repent, with our whole heart, for what- " soever we have done in the flesh, while we have " yet the time of repentance ; that we may be saved " by the Lord." There is no direct condemnation of purgatorial fire most certainly here, because the good pontiff, who lived about the year 100, had never heard of it ; but the sentiments are entirely inconsistent with a belief in it, and substantially combat its absurdities. Remember that these sentiments are delivered by the head of that Church with which you argue the ancient Irish to have agreed ; and they prove, decidedly, that, old as the doctrine of prayer for the dead might be, and it must be old, for we find it in the Maccabees, (lib. II. c. 12,) that of purgatory is not by any means primitive. The former crept in gradually into the early church abroad, but it was not connected with the latter until of very late years. Fisher, a Roman Catholic, and Bishop of Rochester, (in confut. Luther. Art. 18,) confesses, that it was never or seldom mentioned by the ancient fathers ;*

* I was very much surprised at these passages in Fisher's work—" Nemo certè jam dubitat orthodoxus an purgatorium " sit, de quo tamen apud priscos illos nulla, vel quàm rarò,

he likewise admits, that there is not one text of Scripture that can force any man to believe in it—and, indeed, it must be acknowledged, that there are many which are of sufficient force to compel to the contrary faith. I shall select but a very few strong ones—Look to the expressions of Abraham, in the parable of Lazarus, Luke xvi, 22, 23, and 26; and the passage in John v. 24, "He that heareth my "word, and believeth on him that sent me, HATH "everlasting life, and *shall not* come into condemna-"tion, but IS passed from death unto life." Look also to 1 Thess. iv. 14, and other places, for the state of all men at Christ's coming to judge the world—"them which *sleep* in Jesus shall God bring with "him," &c. And also to Rev. 14. 13.—"Blessed "are the dead which die in the Lord from hence-"forth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from "their labours." But without seeking for texts condemning, in express terms, a doctrine which was not at the time invented; or for others, besides those already quoted, implying tenets which are totally inconsistent with it, I would refer to the entire tenor of Scripture, to its full and free proclamation of unpurchased and unmerited mercy, and especially to

"fiebat mentio;" and the following—"Neque tàm necessaria "fuit, sive purgatorii, seu indulgentiarum fides, in primâ "ecclesiâ atque nunc est." "Faith in a purgatory or in "indulgences was not so necessary in the primitive church, as "it is now;" and this because, as he tells us, there were better men. But surely the suffering of one soul only in a purgatorial fire would have induced the necessity of teaching those doctrines, if they were true; the real fact however is, that they are thoroughly of human and modern invention.

that great and comprehensive truth, which so plainly declares it, and which quenches every spark of purgatorial fire.—" *The blood of Jesus Christ* " *cleanseth from* ALL SIN." 1 John i. 7; and to the last and emphatic declaration of our Saviour from the cross, when he uttered the words—" It is finished."

It might appear proper, from its name, to notice St. Patrick's purgatory in this place; but it is obvious, from its nature, that the consideration of it should be reserved for the head of penance and of pilgrimages.

The next that you mention is a very important doctrine indeed. " The habit," you say, " of " INVOKING, AND PRAYING TO SAINTS was, it is " evident, general among the ancient Irish Christians; " and a life of St. Brigid, written according to Ware " in the 7th century, concludes with the following " words :—' There are two holy virgins in heaven, " who may undertake my protection, Mary and St. " Brigid, on whose patronage let each of us depend.' " See Lannigan Eccl. Hist. v. iii. c. 20, note 107."

It appears to me, that one of the greatest evils likely to arise from the publication of your sentiments on this subject, will follow from the confident *manner* in which you have treated it. The people of Ireland, while they are shrewd and inquisitive, are equally credulous and confiding; they are also, in general, wherever they are not led completely blindfolded, anxious upon this matter; and they are far from being ignorant of Archbishop Usher, and his opinions concerning it. When, therefore, they meet in their research with a history by one of your

popular and influential character, as a national poet, and a political supporter of their native predictions; and perceive how you put away all his assertions as "little grounded in fact," with less than four pages of allegations; in which almost every important doctrine of their religion is handled briefly, and dismissed with little argument, and rather "ex cathe-"dra;" they will naturally be inclined to conclude, that there are stores of proof somewhere, too numerous to produce in detail, and of which, therefore, a specimen must suffice. It is to be expected that this thought will especially suggest itself to the acute Irishman's mind, when he reads your very *jejune* and insufficient paragraph upon this—the most important doctrine of his creed—involving the great accusations of idolatry itself, and of the direct breach of one of the commandments of Jehovah, that are brought against it. He will naturally reason thus within his mind:—"It cannot be because that this "part of the subject is of little consequence, that "Mr. Moore has treated it so very lightly and so "very briefly; it cannot be that he despises the ar-"guments of Usher, and the Protestants, so fully "and boldly brought forward; and surely such a "man cannot be indifferent to the truth itself; it "must be that the matter was so convincingly proved "to him, that he thought it was quite unneces-"sary to trouble us with arguments respecting it; "but that it would suffice to give us, who have "neither opportunity or leisure for research, his "own convictions on the subject." And he will

most probably add, that " indeed Mr. M. might as well " have spared such a specimen as he has exhibited " to us; and left us to take the whole matter upon " trust, in the manner we are so well used to with " regard to questions of religion."

Permit me, however, to take a very different view of the subject; for in fact you have, in this the only argument, selected the best that you had—and what is that best? the authority of a life of St. Brigid—a work of the seventh century, and of course no fit evidence in our cause—a work that, in the opinion of many, will carry its own character and condemnation in the sentence you have quoted. You have the following passage of your history, (p. 257.)—" By one of " those violations of chronology not unfrequently " hazarded, for the purpose of bringing extraordinary " personages together, an intimate friendship is sup- " posed to have existed between her," (St. Brigid,) " and St. Patrick; and she is even said to have woven, " at the Apostle's own request, the shroud in which " he was buried. But with this imagined intercourse " between the two saints, the dates of their respec- " tive lives are inconsistent; and it is but just possible " that Brigid might have seen the great apostle of " her country, as she was a child of twelve years old " when he died!" I presume that you speak here of the author on whom you above rely; but, whether or not, I will reject the evidence of so late a period, and indeed I exclude all that I have read of St. Brigid, from the character of unexceptionable evidence—whosoever will examine that which is to be

met with in the Florilegium of Messingham, will find that I am quite justified in doing so.

This leaves, therefore, your assertion altogether destitute of proof; but not so our side of the question: and in support of it, I shall now once more call on your own witnesses, St. Patrick, and the second Sedulius. The 23d canon of the accredited synod of St. Patrick, already mentioned, declares thus—"Non "adjurandam esse creaturam aliam, nisi creatorem."—"No creature is to be adjured" *(or invoked)* "but "only the creator," and Sedulius, (in Rom. 1 and 2,) says—"Adorare alium, præter Patrem, Filium, et "Spiritum sanctum, impietatis crimen est"—"*To* "*pray to any* other, beside the Father, Son, and "Holy Ghost, is the crime of impiety." Whether, therefore, it be evident that, "the habit of *invoking* "and *praying* to saints" was authorised by the ancient Irish church, or otherwise, I leave it to the public to determine.

But there are some further testimonies on this subject. The allegation of an agreement between the ancient British, or Welsh, and the Irish churches, has already been established by proof; from the following description, therefore, of the horror expressed by the former against the practices of the Romish Church, in the matter now before us, we may assuredly conclude, what were the opinions that were entertained by the early Irish Christians respecting it. A very ancient MS., preserved in Ben. Col. Cambridge, (cxlv. Art. 173) informs us thus—that the Britons lived in tolerable peace with the Saxons, while

these latter were heathens; but, "after that, by the "means of Austin, the Saxons became Christians, *in* "*such sort as Austin had taught them*, the Bryttans "wold not, after that, nether eate nor drynke wyth "them; because they corrupted, with superstition, "ymages, and ydolatrie, the true religion of Christ."

There is nothing that will better exhibit the truth of the case, as it respects this "habit" of the primitive saints of Ireland, than an examination of the accredited works of St. Patrick; they shew forth, in a most striking manner, the man of continual prayer—one hundred times a day—(a definite for an indefinite number,) did he address himself to his God—as he tells us in his confession (Opus. p. 6.)—before the dawn, in the snow, and frost, and rain, he ceased not, because his spirit burned within him; yet, throughout all these works, thus replete with accounts of his prayers and intercessions, not one passage does any where occur, in which the least mention is made of invocation of the Virgin Mary, or of any created saint or being whatsoever. One would suppose, that in relating the dream which induced him to visit the west of Ireland, and to act as an instructor to its natives, an occasion would occur of noticing other mediators than the Lord Jesus Christ, or intercessors with him, had he ever imagined that there could be any such; but no—neither here, nor elsewhere, is there the least allusion of the kind; but he concludes the relation thus—"Dominus advocatus noster pos-"tulat pro nobis"—"the Lord our advocate prays "for us"—while he ends his confession in these

words—" Testificor, in veritate, coram Deo et sanctis " angelis ejus," &c. " I witness, in truth, before " God and his holy angels," &c. I consider this silence to be much more than negative proof; for were he like a good modern Romanist, he could not have so slighted by uniform silence the Virgin and the saints; and it is all the proof the subject can admit of, for he could not be expected to have condemned, in positive terms, a practice which had not as yet commenced its existence in Ireland. Conformably with this is the following fact, which I give upon the authority of the learned Spelman. (See his Conc. v. i. p. 218.) He tells us, that there was in his possession a Psalter, written about the year 754, shortly before the second council of Nice, which contains a prayer annexed to each of the psalms, and of the sections of the 119th, 171 in all; yet not one of them is addressed to the Virgin Mary, the apostles, or any of the saints—but this document refers rather to the practice of the church in general at the time, and not merely the Irish portion of it.

It has been a matter of surprise to me, that when, with so much decision and good sense, you have rejected the gross doctrine of transubstantiation, you could still give countenance to the far grosser one of idolatry, which " the invoking and praying to saints" undoubtedly is; and I was still more surprised to find the Protestant condemnation of it put forward by you as HERESY, where you are speaking, in your 296th page, of Dungal's work, written A.D. 827, " in opposition," as you say, " to Claudius," bishop of

Turin, "who reviving the HERESY of Vigilantius "maintained, that *saints ought not to be honoured*, "*nor any reverence paid to* IMAGES! The Irish "Doctor," you add, "contends zealously for the *an-* "*cient Catholic practice!*" And so must I contend, with equal zeal, for the yet *more ancient* Irish one condemning it; declaring, with St. Paul, (Acts xxiv. 14,) "But this I confess unto thee, that after "the way which *they call* HERESY, so worship I *the* "*God of* MY FATHERS, believing all things that are "*written in the* LAW, and the prophets"—and for the yet more ancient canon of that LAW that was written with the finger of Jehovah, although now it is obliterated from many of the authentic documents of your "ancient Catholic church"—"THOU SHALT "NOT MAKE UNTO THEE ANY GRAVEN IMAGE— "THOU SHALT NOT BOW DOWN THYSELF UNTO "THEM." You say, Sir, of this Irish Doctor, that instead of resorting to the aid of argument, on a point *solely to be decided by* "*authority and tradition*," "he appeals to the constant practice of the church "from the very earliest times."—Without delaying to exhibit the manifest error that this passage contains, I shall take up one part of it only connected with our subject; and close my argument upon the head now under our consideration, by shewing, that the practice of the early church out of Ireland, as well as of that portion of it that existed in this island, was not such as you have there declared it to be.

"Tum irascitur angelus," says St. Augustine, (in Ps. 95) "quando ipsum colere volueris."—"An

" angel is offended, when you desire to worship him ;" and so, of course, would St. Augustine, were you to invoke *him*. We find the use of images condemned by the unanimous decree of 338 bishops, assembled in the general council at Constantinople, A.D. 754; and it was not authorised until it was permitted by a canon passed in the second council of Nice, A.D. 787. This latter canon continued still to be resisted in England; and was rejected by the council of Frankfort, holden A.D. 794, at which our celebrated countryman, Alcuinus, the friend and preceptor of Charlemagne, was present. (See canon 2.) It is entirely without allowance from Scripture, which, on the contrary, abounds with awful passages denouncing it. It is needless, however, to go beyond the second commandment. With reference to the extravagant honour now paid to the Virgin, there is a remarkable passage in Luke xi. 27, where our Lord, in answer to the premature instance of it there exhibited, by the woman who exclaimed—" Blessed is the womb that " bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked"—checks her with prophetical caution thus—" Yea, " rather blessed are they that hear the word of the " Lord, and keep it." To conclude with one text, which is as it were *instar omnium*, and which therefore prevents the necessity of adducing more; we find it thus written in 1 Timothy ii. 5, " There is one " God, and one Mediator between God and man, the " man Christ Jesus:" and that we need no intercessor is plain from this, among many such passages in the Bible, containing his invitations, his miracles, indeed

all his history—"For we have not an high priest "which cannot be touched with the feelings of our "infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we "are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come BOLDLY "to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, "and find grace to help in the time of need." Heb. iv. 15 and 16.

The next subject that you bring forward is thus introduced.—"The penitential discipline established "in their monasteries was of the most severe descrip- "tion. The weekly fast days observed by the whole "Irish church were, according to the practice of the "primitive times, Wednesdays and Fridays; and the "abstinence of the monks, and of the more pious "among the laity, was carried to an extreme unknown "in later days. The benefit of pilgrimages was also "inculcated; and we find mention occasionally, in "the Annals, of princes dying in pilgrimage"—and you add in a note—"See Tigernach, A.D. 610, and "also 723. In the Annals of the Four Masters, "A.D. 777, the pilgrimage of a son of the king of "Connaught, to the island of Hyona, is recorded."

Mr. Locke says, that much of the difference of opinion that exists between disputants would be avoided, if they were to commence their arguments by a definition of the terms which they employ. I am sure that such a method would assist in arriving sooner at the truth; but I am not so certain that it would always equally lead to the mutual agreement of the adverse parties. In our case I fear that it would not conduce to that end; for while, vaguely using the

terms penitential discipline and abstinence, you seem to propose what is reasonable, when you bring these words into contact with the doctrines and practices of the modern Roman Catholic church, which I cannot admit to be either scriptural in themselves, or authorised by the teaching or example of our primitive saints, your proposition becomes altogether inadmissible.

I do admit that penitential discipline, fasts, and abstinence did exist, not only among the early Irish, but among all the primitive Christians; but I entirely deny that they held the sacrament of penance, or the merit of these exercises, as taught in the modern Roman Catholic church. But before I proceed I must, in the first place, remark, that what you have here advanced upon the first head of this subject, rests exclusively upon assertion without argument. In the second place, that, were that which you have alleged of weekly fast days, &c. true to its full extent, it refers only to usages commenced after the year 600, and are not therefore to be brought forward as the practice of the primitive times. And thirdly, this very extreme of abstinence which you so much glory in, is the precise point of great difference, which is mentioned to have marked the growing degeneracy of the Irish saints, where the three orders already alluded to are spoken of.—The third and latest of these is called merely holy, and is said to have shone but as stars; having fallen off from the characters of holiest and holier, and gradually lessened in brilliancy from the splendor of the sun and of the moon; and they are at the same time described, by their having been peculiarly

ascetic; and to have lived "à peu près à la maniere "des moines de La Trappe."—(M'Geoghegan, Hist. D'Irelande, v. 1. 321.) Whether or not this abstinence of theirs "was carried to an extreme unknown "in later days," we shall soon have an opportunity of better judging, as an offset of the Monks of La Trappe has just been planted and cherished in this ill-fated country.

But taking the rule of Columbanus, "the moral "instructions written for his monks," (p. 267) to which you have referred, I shall abstract from them his directions on this subject; and then your readers, comparing them with the modern fastings of Romanism, may perceive how far they differ from each other. It ordains (c. 5.) not merely on Wednesdays and Fridays, but on "every day to fast, and every day "to eat;" "because this is true discretion, that the "power of spiritual proficiency might be retained by "abstinence."—Again, "Let the food of the monks be "mean, flying satiety and excess of drink, that it "may both sustain, and not hurt them."—And once more, c. 8.—"It profiteth them little if they were "virgins in body, and not virgins in mind." And Claudius, whom I formerly brought forward as quoting St. Jerome, may again be admitted to give testimony here, as he gives it in the words of the celebrated St. Augustine—"The children of wisdom," he says, "understand, that neither in abstaining nor in eating "is there any virtue; but in contentedness in bearing "the want, and temperance of not corrupting a man's "self by abundance."

It is clear from these, that the use of fasting among our ancestors was to prepare and humble the mind, through the subjection of the desires of the body; and that it did not in the least degree partake of its modern character in the Roman Catholic church, a human merit, degrading by its mixture the great work of atonement. But it was not indeed very long, before the enormous abuse of this practice led to its censure first, and then to its too great neglect among holy men. The author of "The Life of St. Teresa"—(See Florilegium, p. 395)—speaks of persons, "who, "being assaulted with spiritual vices, which they "neglect, afflict their body with abstinence; thinking "nothing of pride which expelled the angels from "heaven," &c.—and Gildas says—(See Spelman's Concilia, v. 1, p. 55.)—"The abstinence from bodily "food without charity is useless; they are, therefore, "the better men, who do not fast much, nor extrava-"gantly abstain from the creatures of God, but care-"fully keep their heart within pure before God, from "whence they know cometh the issues of life; than "they who eat no flesh, nor delight in secular food, "nor are borne in carriages or by horses, and think "themselves hereby to be as it were superior to "others; upon whom death hath entered through the "windows of pride." This writer of the sixth century seems to have well understood these words of the prophet—"Is this such a fast, saith the Lord, as "I have chosen, for a man to afflict his soul for a "day?—Is not *this* rather the fast I have chosen?

" Loose the bands of wickedness.—Is it not to deal " thy bread to the hungry," &c., " and that thou " hide not thyself from thine own flesh ?"—(Isaiah lviii. 4 and 5, Douay version.)

Your instances of pilgrimages shall not delay me long—they are all of a date too late to shew the practice to be primitive ; I could indeed add to them many more of a similar character. I presume that you have given us the earliest you can find, and therefore it is not to be expected that I should afford more ancient examples, especially as I believe none such to exist. This is not a place in which to shew forth the folly and the evil of these practices ; I shall only say, that it had been better to have withheld the approbation you have given to them, and the encouragement you have afforded them, by speaking of them as inducing benefit—*benefit ! ! !* Oh ! sir, had you ever read an account of the wickedness and the idleness connected with a pilgrimage to Patrick's purgatory, you never could have advocated " the benefit of pilgrimages " in Ireland ; and had you inquired into the history of this place of absurdity and abomination, you would have found a Pope so impressed with a sense of both, as to endeavour to put a stop to the practice. You will find the following fact recorded in the Ulster Annals—" A.D. " 1497, the cave of St. Patrick's purgatory, in " Lough Derg, was demolished in that year, on St. " Patrick's day, by the Guardian of Donegal, and " some persons in the Deanery of Lough Erne,

" deputed by the bishop, by authority of the Pope.*" I think it right to state here, by the way, that this place had no connection at all with St. Patrick, although it bears his name, and is not even mentioned by any of the early writers of his life, nor yet by Jocelin, who flourished in the year 1183; the first notice of it that occurs is by Henry, a monk of Saltry, in the year 1153. I presume that you believe this to be true, and that you do not rest any thing upon the legends connected with this place; but having been led to mention it, I thought it proper to state these facts, in order to disconnect it the more entirely from St. Patrick, and his far different teachings and establishments.

Penitential discipline, as descriptive of what is termed the sacrament of penance, will be better considered under the next head, which you notice thus— " The practice of auricular confession, and their " belief in the power of the priest to absolve from " sin, is proved by the old penitential canons, and " by innumerable passages in the lives of their " saints." And you remark, in a note—" On this point " Usher acknowledges that they did, (no doubt,) " both publicly and privately make confession of their " faults;" (chap. 5,) and adds in proof of this fact " what follows—' One old penitential canon we find " laid down in a synod held in this country about the " year of our Lord 450, by St. Patrick, Auxilius, and

* I quote from " Richardson's Folly of Pilgrimages," p. 43, &c.; this latter part of " The Ulster Annals" has not been given by O'Conor.

" Isserninus, which is as followeth—' A Christian " who hath killed a man, or committed fornication, " or gone unto a soothsayer after the manner of the " Gentiles, for every of those crimes shall do a year " of penance; when his year of penance is accom- " plished he shall come with witnesses, and after- " wards he shall be absolved by the priest.' Usher " contends, however, for their having in so far " differed from the belief of the present Catholics, " that they did not attribute to the priest any more " than a ministerial power in the remission of sins."

Whatever is important here may be examined in connection with this note, which contains the penitential canon alluded to. Besides that we have had enough of " The Lives of the Saints," they are of no importance to us in this place, because of their date; and it is quite impossible to follow them up with any research, on account of the very general manner in which you have quoted them.

Your alleged acknowledgment by Usher requires, as in other instances of his admissions brought forward by you, to be set out at length, in order that its true nature may fully appear. You have coupled his admission with the old penitential canon, but you have entirely withheld his opening out of the true ancient meanings attached to confessions, to penances, and to absolutions. I cannot better remedy this evil, or correct this error or mis-statement, than by transcribing, from the chapter which you have referred to, the entire of what he has written upon the subject; observing only, that as it embodies a

reference to our mutually acknowledged authorities, I shall, by transcribing from him, give also what they allege, and thus be saved the necessity of intruding on your time by a separate reference to each of them.

His words are these—"Upon speciall occasions "they did, no doubt, both PUBLICLY AND PRI- "VATELY make confession of their faults; as well "that they might receive counsailes and direction for "their recovery, as that they might bee made par- "takers of the benefit of the keys, for the quieting "of their troubled consciences." I shall refer to the original for some instances given in this place, in order that I may not unnecessarily encumber this extract—"Now the counsell," he thus proceeds, "commonly given unto the penitent after confession "was, that he should wipe away his sinnes by meet "fruits of repentance—(Confessa dignis PÆNITEN- "TIÆ* fructibus abstergerent'—Bed. Ec. Hist. lib. "4. c. 27,) which course, Bede observeth, to have "been usually prescribed by our Cuthbert. For "penances were then exacted, as *testimonies of the sin- "cerity of that* INWARD REPENTANCE, which was "necessarily required for obtaining remission of the "sinne; and so had reference to the taking away the

* I might well have questioned the propriety of the use of the word penance as a translation of the word pœnitentia, in every place in which it occurs throughout this argument; and it should be remembered that all the writers from whom we quote wrote in Latin; but I shall not encumber the discussion with this worn-out matter, but acquiesce the rather in the use of the term penance, as Usher has done so in his arguments.

" guilt, and not of the TEMPORALL PUNISHMENT " remaining after the forgivenesse of the guilt, which " is the NEW FORMED use of penances invented " by our later Romanists." He then produces the example of the old penitential canon, in the words which you have correctly and fully quoted, and proceeds thus:—" These Bishops did take order, (we " see,) according to the discipline generally used in " those times, that the penance should first be per- " formed, and when long and good proofe had bin " given, by that means, of the truth of the parties re- " pentance, they wished the priest to impart unto " him the benefit of absolution; whereas, *by the new* " *device of sacramental penance*, the matter is now " far more easily transacted: by virtue of the keyes " the sinner is instantly of *attrite* made *contrite*, and " thereupon, as soon as hee hath made his confession, " he presently receiveth his absolution: after this " some sorry PENANCE is imposed, which, upon " better consideration, may bee converted into PENCE, " and so a quicke end is made of many a foule " businesse.

"But for the right use of the keys, wee fully accord " with Claudius: that the office of remitting and re- " taining sinnes, which was given to the apostles, ' is " now, in the bishops and priests, committed unto " every church; namely, that having taken know- " ledge of the causes of such as have sinned, as many " as they shall behold humble and truly penitent, " those they may now with compassion absolve from " the feare of everlasting death; but such as they

" discerne to persist in the sins which they have com-
" mitted, those they may declare to be bound over to
" everlasting punishments.' And, in thus absolving
" such as be truly penitent, we willingly yeeld, that
" the pastors of God's church doe remit sinnes after
" their manner, that is to say, *ministerially* and *im-*
" *properly ;* so that the priviledge of forgiving sinnes
" *properly* and absolutely, be still unto God alone.
" Which is at large set out by the same Claudius ;
" when he expoundeth the historie of the man sicke
" of the palsey, that was cured by our Saviour in the
" 9th of St. Matthew. For, *following Bede*, upon
" that place he writeth thus—' The scribes say true,
" that none can forgive sinnes but God alone ; who
" also forgiveth BY THEM to whom hee hath given
" the power of forgiving.' "

It is clear, therefore, that in the setting forth of this matter, which rests indeed chiefly in the proper explanation of terms, you have not either done justice to Usher, or to the subject itself. There is a vast difference, surely, between penance as "a sacrament," by which "we receive forgiveness of those sins com-
" mitted after baptism," (Catec. R. C. pa. 52;) and by the performance of which " we satisfy God ;" and between auricular or sacramental confession made to the priest alone—all doctrines of the modern Romish church—and the penitential discipline enjoined by the old Irish canon ; the "coram omnibus qui ibidem
" erant peccata sua confessus est"—" he confessed his
" sins before all that were present,"—mentioned in Adamnan's Life of St. Columbkille, (lib. i. c. 16;)

and the declaration of the sinner's absolution there also recorded—"Rise up, son, and be comforted; thy "sins which thou hast committed are forgiven; be- "cause, *as it is written*, a contrite and humbled heart "God doth not despise."

Two unquestionable authorities still remain to demonstrate, that not only the Roman Catholic use of confession, but other doctrines upon which you have not touched, were unknown to, or else quite neglected by, the Irish church, even so late as the year 1140, about which time St. Malachy was Archbishop of Armagh—St. Bernard, in his life of that prelate, (c. 6.) distinctly asserts this fact. The other is to be found among the Letters of Alcuinus, (Ep. 71, edit. Quercitani.) This learned Irishman, and friend of Charlemagne, addressing the churches of the Scots—(certainly some read it, of the Goths)—gives to both clergy and laity great praise; notwithstanding certain customs which were practised by them, to wit, that none of the laity were willing to make confession to the priests—"Neminem ex laicis velle confessionem "sacerdotibus dare."

But upon this subject, penance, as upon that of pilgrimages, I have again to lament, that by the stamp of approbation which you have thoughtlessly put upon the practice of penances in Ireland, you conduce, as far as your influence lies, to do injury which it is not in the power of your talents to repair. If, as I have said before, you had ever witnessed, if you had ever read of, if you had reflected on, the degradations of the human intellect, the perversions of the human

feelings, the tortures of the human frame, exhibited annually in the case of thousands, in their penances performed at Lough Derg, Croagh Patrick, and numerous other places every where in Ireland, you would not, I trust, have chimed in with the continuance of such follies and impieties; but rather have joined with the better disposed of the Roman Catholic Church, to endeavour to banish them from the island altogether. And, Sir, had you known—but you must know it—had you, therefore, reflected on, or properly cared for, the perpetual and tyrannical bondage in which the modern abuse of the wholesome ancient doctrines of penitential discipline, confession, and absolution, holds the bodies, and the souls, and the purses of your poor, ignorant, fellow-countrymen, you would have bent all your energies to rouse them to break off their spiritual fetters, and not have laboured thus to rivet them more firmly.

The doctrines here considered are so interwoven with those of human merits and works, self-sacrifices, and such like, that I feel it would lead to endless enlargement on the subject, were I to enter into a full consideration of their antiquity, or their connection with the precepts of the Bible. I shall, therefore, refer but to two or three clear texts, which are quite sufficient to settle all difference of opinion on these points. It is thus declared of his people by the Lord, (Heb. x. 17 and 18)—"Their sins and iniquities will "I remember no more. Now, where remission of sins "is, there is no more offering for sin." And let the Romanist ponder well what St. Peter himself has

written for our consideration—" Ye know that ye " were not redeemed with corruptible things, as " silver and gold, but with the precious blood of " Christ, as of a lamb without blemish or without " spot."—1 Pet. i. 18 and 19. We find the following striking passage, also, in the book of the Prophet Micah, (vi. 6, &c.)—" Wherewith shall I come before " the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? " Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with " calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased " with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of " rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my " transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of " my soul? He hath shewed thee oh man! what " is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, " but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk " humbly with thy God?" Of the doctrine of *auricular* confession, I may add, that it was not commanded until the 21st canon of the Council of Lateran ordained it, A.D. 1215. The previous practice will appear from Lombard's Sentences, lib. iv. c. 17; T. Aquinas on that passage, and Gratian, de pœn. dist. 1. c. 89.

The next subject presents to us no difficulty, and suggests but a few remarks. The truth of Usher's assertions is conceded, although very reluctantly, in the following words—" The only point indeed, " either of doctrine or discipline—and under this " latter head alone the exception falls—in which the " *least* difference of any moment can be detected, " between the religion professed by the first Irish

" Christians, and that of the Catholics of the present " day, is with respect to the marriage of the clergy; " which, as appears from the same sources of evi- " dence that have afforded all the other proofs was, " though certainly not approved of, yet permitted " and practised. Besides a number of incidental " proofs of this fact, the sixth canon of the " synod of St. Patrick enjoins that—the clerk's " wife shall not walk out without having her " head veiled." Your note here adds—" If the term " clerk here be understood to comprise all the mem- " bers of the clerical orders, the permission to marry " extended also to priests; but, it is thought by " some, that the words of the canon apply only to " the inferior ranks of the clergy. With respect to " our English church, (says Dr. Milner,) at the end " of the sixth century we gather from St. Gregory's " permission for the clerks in minor orders to take " wives, that this was unlawful for the clergy in holy " orders; namely, for bishops, priests, and deacons, " agreably to a well-known rule of reasoning— " ' Exceptio probat regulam ;' and we are justified in " inferring the same with respect to the Irish clergy " in St. Patrick's time. Inquiry into certain vulgar " opinions, &c., Letter 14."

I am afraid, my dear sir, that your readers will imagine, from your method of concession in these passages, if they be not convinced of it already, that you are writing under the influence of much prejudice, and altogether determined to support a system; as you would otherwise have probably granted more fully

what you cannot deny, and have spared also those sidewinds which bear indirectly upon your general object. Insinuation indeed is no argument, it is well if it be truth. The *only* point you say—Have you forgotten Easter, and the tonsure, and the three chapters, in your own history? (p. 283,) and, if you consider these and others to be of a nature too trifling, although they were far otherwise considered by the ancient Irish themselves, on what possible authority do you pronounce the marriage of the clergy to be "certainly "not approved of," although "permitted and prac-"tised?" but principally, why do you neutralise the whole concession by the observation—"it is thought "by some that the words of the canon apply only "to the inferior ranks of the clergy?" and what is the instance given of these *some?* Dr. Milner—who, writing of the English Church, conjectures, from a pope's permission for clerks in minor orders to take wives, that it was unlawful for bishops, priests, and deacons to do so; and then, upon this conjecture, again conjectures that it was also so in Ireland. This is really the elephant bearing the world, and the tortoise the elephant; but I proceed to demonstrate that this fact was far otherwise.

And first.—The words of the canon itself declare it, they are as follows—"Quicunque Clericus, ab "HOSTIARIO usque ad SACERDOTEM, sine tunicâ "visus fuerit, &c. Et si non more Romano capilli "ejus tonsi sint, et uxor ejus si non velato capite "ambulaverit, pariter a laicis contemnentur, et ab "Ecclesiâ separentur." "Whatsoever clerk, from

" the door-keeper to the priest, shall be seen without " his tunic, &c.; and if his hair be not shorn after " the Roman manner, and his wife shall walk out " without having her head veiled, let them both be " shunned by the laity, and separated from the " Church."—I shall here first observe, that this canon gives no authority for the translation into "THE clerk," with the article; which cannot but convey at once to the mind of the reader, perhaps almost unconsciously, the idea of the inferior person usually known by the name: in the next place, as the Roman mode of tonsure is enjoined, the canon is certainly favourable to the practices of that see; and, therefore, this allowance by it of marriage to the clergy, comes with the greater power as a testimony: and, thirdly, that we are not to infer—as Dr. Milner would perhaps here also contend—from the silence of the canon respecting the wives of those who are of the order of bishops, and because that "exceptio probat regulam," that they were not allowed to have wives, for I shall now prove the contrary by undeniable truths.

It is a curious and convincing fact, that, even so late as the 10th, 11th, and 12th centuries, in the very see of Armagh, "the primacy passed to the " chief of the sept, as a kind of inheritance, for " fifteen generations," (Bernard's Life of Malachy, c. vii. and Harris Ware, p. 49 and 54.)—Thus Amalgaid, who was primate in the year 1021, was father to two bishops of that see. Celsus, bishop of Armagh, who died A.D. 1129, was a married man, (see a MS. T.C.D. C. I. 26,) where it is said, that his

marriage was " more *gentis* suæ ;" the eight primates who preceded him were also married.—(Bernard, ub. sup.) This custom of succeeding by inheritance gave rise in our island to the species of property known by the names of Corbes, Herenachs, and Termoners ; (see Usher's tract on these, Val. Col. i. p. 192,) and at length this abuse became so offensive to the pope, Innocent III., that he wrote letters to John Sacernitanus, his legate in Ireland, A.D. 1104— " Monens, inter cœtera, ut eum in Hibernia abusum " tollat, quo filii et nepotes patribus et avis in bene- " ficiis succedebant"—(Vit. and gest. Pontif, Ciaconii, Rom. 1601, p. 515)—" that he should abolish that " bad usage in Ireland, by which sons and grandsons " succeeded to the benefices of their fathers and " grandfathers." " So constant," as you remark, (p. 285,) " did the Irish remain to one line of " descent, as well in their abbots as their kings."

So much, Sir, for the conjectures of Dr. Milner, and the insinuations so diffidently hung upon them by yourself. I cannot omit the interesting fact, that St. Patrick was, by his own confession, and the accounts of his contemporaries, the son of Calphurnius, a deacon, and his grandfather Potitus was a priest. The assertion is somewhere made, but not on any authority, that they were neither of them ordained until after their respective marriages ; however, as this is possible, and cannot be disproved, I shall wave the use of this powerful authority upon the subject. I shall not unnecessarily enlarge upon this head, so as to inquire into the practice of the rest of the Christian

world. The celibacy of the clergy was confessedly introduced of late years; and certainly could not have been within the contemplation of St. Paul, when he wrote his epistles to Timothy and to Titus.—"A "bishop must then be blameless, the husband of one "wife," &c.—(See 1st Tim. iii, 2; and also, v. 12, for deacons; and Tit. i. 6, for elders.)

One point alone remains, and upon it you express yourself thus:—"The evidence which Usher has ad- "duced to prove that communion in both kinds was "permitted to the laity among the Irish, is by no "means conclusive, or satisfactory—though it would "certainly appear, from one of the canons of the pe- "nitential of St. Columbanus, that, before the intro- "duction of this rule, novices had been admitted to "the cup. It is to be remembered, however, that "any difference of practice, in this respect, has always "been considered as a mere point of discipline, and "accordingly subject to such alteration, as the change "of time and circumstances may require." You add, in a note respecting Archbishop Usher—"He founds "his conclusion chiefly on their use of such phrases "as, 'the communion of the Lord's body and blood,' "whereas the Catholics of the present day, among "whom the laity receive the sacrament under one "kind only, use the very same language"—and there is another note respecting the canon of St. Columbanus, which is in these words, "Col. in Pœnit. as "I find it thus cited by Cellier, 'Novi quia indocti, et "quicunque tales fuerint, ad calicem non accedant.'"

I trust that it will not be thought that I also have

my system to sustain, and that for that reason only seem determined to find fault with whatsoever you have said upon every point. I feel conscious that it is not for that reason that I do so; and, if truth require that I should present this very combative appearance, the blame of it must rest with him who has given the occasion. On this head I am bound, in order to justify the argument of Usher, in support of what was the fact respecting communion of both kinds by the laity, to add some further testimony to his; and to make some observations, especially on your concluding remarks. But, first, I must point out an important concession made by you here, as it relates to the practice of our very first and holiest Christians—let us remember that, at the earliest, the rule of St. Columbanus must be limited to the year 600; and, if "before this rule, novices had been admitted to the "cup," which you acknowledge appears to have been the case, the practice of excluding them could not have been primitive, but must have been an innovation on the usage of at least the holier and holiest orders.

Whether or not the evidence adduced by Usher on this subject, be "by no means conclusive or satisfac- "tory," or whether it be chiefly the use of such phrases as "the communion of the Lord's body and "blood," on which he forms his conclusion, and not something more home to the point, will appear from the following transcript of some of his words. I shall confine myself to those which relate to Ireland. "Cogitosus," he says, "writeth in the life of St. "Brigid, touching the place in the church of Kildare,

" whereunto the Abbatesse, with her maidens and " widowes used to resort, ' that they might enjoy the " banquet of the body and blood of Jesus Christ, " ut convivio corporis et sanguinis fruantur Jesu " Christi ;) which was agreeable to the practice," (Usher asserts,) " not only of the nunneries founded " beyond the seas, according to the rule of Colum- " banus, where the virgins ' received the body of the " Lord, and sipped his blood, (as appeareth by that " which Ionas relateth of Domna, the life of Burgun- " dofora,)—'quædam ex his nomine Domna, cum jam " corpus Domini accepisset, ac sanguinem libasset'— " but also of St. Brigid herselfe, who was the " foundresse of the monasterie of Kildare—one of " whose miracles is reported, even in the later legends, " to have happened, when shee was about to drinke " out of the chalice, at the time of her receiving of " the eucharist; which they that list to looke after, " may find in the collections of Capgrave, Surius, " and such like." Again, are you justified in your note, in saying of Usher, that " he founds his conclu- " sion chiefly on their use of such phrases as the com- " munion of the Lord's body and blood," and thus presenting him as relying on the use merely of a dubious phrase? when the very sentence which I presume you refer to, which occurs in his Religion of the Ancient Irish, p. 38, proceeds thus, quoting from Bede's Life of St. Cuthbert:—

> " Pocula degustat vitæ, Christique supinum
> " Sanguine munit iter--

" lest any man should thinke, that under the formes

" of *bread* ALONE, he might be said to have been par-
" taker of the *body and blood* of the Lord, by way of
" *concomitance.*" These, certainly, are not such phrases as you would confine Usher to have used—whether they be conclusive testimony or not, is another question; in my mind they exhibit the very best evidence to rebut your assertions.

A very strong testimony of this continuing to be the practice of the English and Irish churches, even down to the year 1081, occurs in the Sylloge so often referred to; we there find, (p. 73,) Lanfranc, Archbishop of Canterbury, writing thus to an Irish Bishop—" Credimus enim *generaliter* OMNES OMNI-
" BUS *ætatibus*, plurimum expedire, tam viventes
" quam morientes, Dominici corporis et sanguinis
" sese munire"—" For we believe in general, that it
" is most proper for *all of every age*, whether living
" or dying, to strengthen themselves with the body
" and blood of the Lord." The pope Gelasius, indeed, about the year 476, declared, " that the Eucharist
" could not without sacrilege be received in one kind
" only;" (Apud Gratian de consecrat. dist. 2, c. 12)—
" quia divisio unius ejusdemque mysterii sine grandi
" sacrilegio non potest provenire"—and the very words of the council of Constance, whose ordinance first, in the year 1415, forbade the cup to the people, acknowledge the primitive custom to be such as I contend for, (sess. 13)—they are as follows: " Licet
" in primitivâ ecclesiâ hujusmodi sacramentum reci-
" peretur a fidelibus sub utraque specie, &c."—
" Although in the PRIMITIVE CHURCH this sacrament

" was received by the faithful under both kinds; yet, " from henceforth, it shall be given in one kind only " to the lay people." Now, to those at least who hold the infallibility of general councils, this settles the point; and I am inclined to think that you were partly under the influence of some such irresistible evidence, which almost persuaded you to acknowledge that we are in the right, as your concluding paragraph exhibits very much the air of the offer of a compromise upon the subject. " It is to be remembered, " however," you say, " that any difference of practice " in this respect, has been always considered as a " mere point of discipline; and accordingly *subject* to " such alteration as the change of time and circum- " stances may require." I am sorry thus to urge my contest with you to the very last; and to enter my protest against this your greatest error of all—the matter now under inquiry is by no means a " mere " point of discipline," however it may appear so to modern Roman Catholics; but one of essential and primary importance. To those who can persuade themselves that the consecrated wafer contains, really and substantially, the living body of Christ, warmed by his living blood, it may in one point of view be of little importance, whether or not they drink additionally of his blood from the chalice; and it may be considered as a matter of *mere discipline* their doing or not doing so: but, to those who do not hold that doctrine, the receiving of the sacrament of the wine becomes essential to the due observance of the rite commanded—it becomes, not a business of human

arrangement according to changes of times and circumstances, but a duty of implicit and uncalculating obedience to positive ordinance—to a command solemnly delivered thus to us in his last moments, by our dying Lord—" And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and " gave it to them, saying, Drink ye ALL of it, for " this is my blood of the New Testament, which is " shed for many for the remission of sins ;" Mat. xxvi. 27, 28. It certainly does appear to me most strange, that, while a strictly literal understanding of the text " This is my body" is insisted on, against the general analogy of Scripture, the obligation of the very next sentence is done away, by a process totally at variance with literal construction ; and this for the purpose of inducing positive disobedience ; and still further, in direct contradiction to all that the Bible inculcates, to wit—that " obedience is better than " sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."

I have in some other instances stated the period at which the rust of modern Romanism began, out of Ireland, to encrust the fair mirror in which we now see reflected, although as in a glass darkly, the pure and simple image of our only Redeemer, and mediator Christ Jesus ; that which is now before us, the denial of communion in both kinds, is one of very modern invention, as is manifest from the words of the canon of the council of Constance already quoted. I do not know that it was ever pretended to have been grounded on any warrant from Scripture ; while, as we have seen, it directly contradicts its most explicit injunctions.

I have now, my dear Sir, gone through the four pages, in which you have thought fit to represent thus the argument of Archbishop Usher—"That rarely "has there been hazarded an assertion so little "grounded on fact"—whether justly or not, our judges are now enabled to determine. But I have not yet done with the subject, or your book. It is of the highest importance yet to consider, whence the first Irish Christians derived their knowledge of divine things, and by what they regulated their principles and their lives; it is also of the greatest consequence to ascertain, what were the great leading doctrines of salvation which they preached. The points of which we have been treating are details—I have only dwelt on them, because you first noticed them; and, therefore, I shall not now detain you, by entering into an inquiry respecting extreme unction, indulgences, the chrism in baptism, and many other peculiarities of the Roman Catholic church, which you have passed over—this is not the place for them, as my letter is confined solely to the subjects which you have primarily mentioned. But the two grand points now alluded to—the great standard of faith, and the great doctrine of justification—are not only the roots from which the others spring, and therefore considerations necessarily arising out of a comment on your history; but essentially bound up with the determination of the principal and comprehensive question on which we are at issue.

It is certainly the fact, that the great standard of faith referred to by the early Irish Christians was the Bible

itself. "It is written," appears to have been most especially the rule of St. Patrick in his confession, and even in the genuine canons of his synods; and a similar deference to the sole word of God seems to have been the characteristic of these early days, and to mark well the period when false doctrine commenced to creep in, and the people began "therefore to err, not knowing the Scriptures "or the power of God;" and to follow those blind leaders who, "teaching doctrines and commandments "of men," made "void the word of God by their "tradition."—(Mark vii. 7, and 13, Rhemish version.)

St. Patrick, as we are informed by Jocelin, his principal biographer, (c. xii.) exercised himself much in reading the Scriptures—"ab ipso primævo pubertatis"—"from the very earliest age of puberty;" and Secundinus, his nephew, to whose poem in his praise you have already introduced us, thus says of him—

"Sacrum invenit thesaurum sacro in volumine."

"He found the sacred treasure in the Holy Volume;" and describes him as—

"Verus cultor, et insignis, agri Evangelici;
"Cujus semina videntur Christi Evangelia."

"a true and eminent cultivator of the evangelical "field, whose seeds appear to have been the gospels "of Christ." The consequences of such a discipline were, the pouring forth among the people of the precepts of that gospel, which the saint himself mentions to be the proper mode of bringing them under the law to Christ; (De abus. sæc.—See his

Opusc, p. 92,) and the performing of miracles, not indeed in the way attributed to him in the monstrous legends of latter days, but by the many conversions, which, as purer tradition informs us, he was the instrument in the Lord's hands of accomplishing in the land. Such indeed is the character which your own better taste and judgment attributes to him, especially where you so graphically describe him (p. 219,) in his interesting interview with the daughters of the Leinster King.

The work of St. Patrick just alluded to contains a paragraph on the modesty (pudicitia) of women, (p. 77,) in which he expresses himself thus—"Bonis "semper moribus delectatur et consentit, et assiduis "scripturarum meditationibus, et eloquiis, animam "vegetat."—"It always delights in and consents "with good morals, and refreshes the soul by conti- "nual meditations and discourses," or conversations, "on the Scriptures." Thus he exhorts even females; and I must again especially observe that, neither here nor elsewhere in his works, does he refer to any other fountain of moral conduct.

Of St. Columbkille we are thus informed by his biographer Adamnanus, (lib. 1, c. 1,) that he was one—"Qui etiam a puero deditus Christiano tyro- "cinio et sapientiæ studiis."—"Who even from his "boyhood was given to a Christian education and "the studies of wisdom." And he is said to have confounded gainsayers, and taught his disciples to support their doctrines, by putting forward the testimo-

nies of the Sacred Scriptures—"prolatis Sacræ Scrip-"turæ testimoniis." No wonder then that a church built upon two such pillars as these should be, for a period at least, "a shining light;" nor was it unfitly compared by the ancient annalists to the celestial luminaries.—See Revel. c. 1.

That in these early days the Scriptures were common in the vulgar tongue, is positively asserted by St. Chrysostom, who must have written the following words before the year 407, at which time he died—"Although thou shouldest go to the "ocean, and those British isles," &c. "thou shouldest "hear all men every where discoursing matters out "of the Scriptures, with another voice, indeed, but "not with another faith," (De util. Scrip. Ed. Sav. V. viii. p. 111,) and it is further evidenced by this still more decisive assertion of Bede, (lib. i. c. 1,)—"This island," (Britain,) "at this present, "with five sundry languages, to the number of the "five books of Moses, doth study and set forth "the knowledge of the perfect truth—that is, with "the language of the English, the Britons, the "Scots" (or Irish,) "the Picts, and the Latins, which "by the study of the Scriptures is made common "to all the rest."

It will be interesting to see a few more instances of the habits, in this respect, of our early saints.

The account given us of St. Columbanus, by his biographer Ionas, is very similar to what we are told of St. Patrick—"So within his breast were laid up

" the treasures of the Holy Scriptures, that, within " the compass of his youthful years," (intra adolescentiæ ætatem,) " he composed an elegant exposition " of the whole book of Psalms;" and this saint wrote thus to Hunualdus, (Syl. p. 11,) " Sint tibi " divitiæ divinæ dogmata legis.'—" Let the divine " precepts of the law be your treasure." St. Kilian, also, and St. Fursa, are said to have applied themselves, " from the time of their *very* " *childhood*," to the study of the Scriptures. (Bede, lib. iii. 19.)

But Bede is still further our authority for several more interesting facts; he tells us (lib. iv. c. 23, Stapleton's translation,) of St. Hilda, Abbess of Lindisfarne, that " such religious men as lived under " government, she made them to bestow their time in " the reading of the Scriptures;" and again he shews us, in the example of Agilbert, a native even of France, that so great was the character of Ireland as a place where " the studying the Scriptures" was especially cultivated, that this stranger went thither, and remained there some time, for that sole purpose— " tunc legendarum gratiâ scripturarum in Hiberniâ, " non parvo tempore demoratus." This fact you have referred to in your note to p. 282. He likewise informs us, that British princes were sent hither for the same reason, and that one named Altfrid became thus most learned in the Scriptures—" Successit " Egfrido in regnum" Northumbriæ " Altfrid, vir in " Scripturis doctissimus," Bed. iv. 26, and in his

poem of the Life of St. Cuthbert, he writes of this monarch thus—

> " Scottorum qui tunc versatus incola terris,
> " Cœlestem intento spirabat corde sophiam ;
> " Nam patriæ fines et dulcia liquerat arva,
> " Sedulus ut Domini mysteria discerit exul."

Again he relates of St. Aidan, the principal of St. Columbkille's successors, that " *all* such as went with " him, *whether clergy or laity*, were obliged to exer- " cise themselves either in reading the Scriptures, or in " the learning of the Psalms ;" and also, that " the " people flocked anxiously on the Lord's day, to St. " Aidan, and St. Finan, and St. Colman, to the " churches and monasteries, not for the feeding of " their bodies, but for the hearing of the word of " God." (Ecc. Hist. lib. iii. c. 5 and 26.)

This, therefore, is the secret why this island was called " Sanctorum patria," the country of saints ; why so many notices occur, as Camden observes, in ancient writers, of persons being sent hither for education—" amandatus est ad disciplinam in " Hibernia, (p. 52, of your history,) and that Erin is thus mentioned in the ancient rude poetry of the day, " Ivit ad Hibernos sophia mirabile claros." Ionas, a Roman Catholic writer, the biographer of Columbanus, bears testimony at once to the independence of her inhabitants of all authority, and to their enjoyment of the great source of Christian doctrine, and also the influence of that doctrine upon their faith where he says, " Gens, quanquam absque reliquarum

" gentium legibus, tamen in Christiani vigore dog-
" mate florens, omnium vicinarum gentium fide præ-
" pollens."—" A nation which, although without
" the laws of other nations, yet so flourishing in the
" vigour of Christian doctrine, that it exceeds the
" faith of all the neighbouring nations." (Vit. Colum. c. 1.) While Bede, another steadfast adherent to the Roman see, testifies of them thus, (lib. iii. 4,) that " they observed only those works of piety and
" chastity which they could learn in the prophetical,
" evangelical, and apostolical *writings*."* This also is the secret why, considering her foreign aspect, ancient Erin was the island of missions; from which first emanated those crowds of sainted teachers, from whom " savage clans and roving barbarians received
" the benefits of knowledge, and the blessings of
" religion"—and the greater part of Britain her first hearing of the blessed truths of the Gospel.†

* This venerable historian seems to think that he could not better recommend a holy person, than by saying, as he does of St. Adamnanus, that " he was a good man, and wise, and most " nobly" (noblissimé) " instructed in the knowledge of the " Scriptures;" and it is remarkable that while he manifestly condemns the independence of the Irish Christians, he bears this candid and generous testimony to their character, where speaking of St. Aidan, he says, that " although he could not " keep Easter contrary to the manner of them that sent him, " yet he was careful diligently to perform the works of faith, " and godliness, and love, according to the manner used by " all holy men. Wherefore he was justly beloved of all, even " those who differed from him with respect to Easter; and he " was not only held in reverence by those of meaner rank, but " also by the bishops themselves, Honorius of Canterbury, " and Felix of the East Angles."

† It is pleasing to find a foreigner, M. Rapin, doing justice to this fair claim of Ireland, which will be probably ridiculed

It is interesting to reflect on the primitive and scriptural mode by which these two great apostles of Ireland, St. Patrick and St. Columbkille, prepared themselves for, and accomplished, their great task. It had been early thus enjoined by Jehovah to the Jews—"These words which I command thee this "day, shall be in thine heart, and thou shalt teach "them diligently to the children."—(Deut. vi. 6, 7,) David had declared in the Psalms, (I shall give the passage in the Roman Catholic Latin, and Rhemish versions,) "Testimonium Domini fidele, sapientiam "præstans *parvulis*"—"The testimony of the Lord "is faithful, giving wisdom to LITTLE ONES;" (Ps. xix. 8,) and St. Paul had exhorted Timothy, to continue in the things which he had learned, knowing of whom he had learned them, to wit, his mother and grandmother—"and because from *thy* INFANCY thou "hast known the Holy Scriptures." Such was the first truly Catholic doctrine; and according to it these holy men were themselves exercised, and disciplined their disciples. It is a matter of modern corruption and Satanic innovation, that the Bible has been made to be a sealed book to any; and if the doctrine of justification be an article by which we may try a standing or a falling church, another test may surely be said to exist in the extent of the per-

by some of her own sons at home. "It is *surprisingly strange*," he says, (Hist. of Eng. Fol. Lond. 1732, p. 80,) "that the conversion of the English should be attributed to "Austin; rather than to Aidan, to Finan, to Colman, to Cedd, "to Dimna, and the other Scottish" (or Irish) "monks, who "undoubtedly laboured much more abundantly than he."

mission given for the perusal of the Scriptures, in which that doctrine is revealed. In the primitive Christian Church of Ireland the Bible was read, as we have seen, by all, in their vulgar tongue; the laity, the common people, the women, the very children, were encouraged, nay ordained, to engage in this hallowed occupation; and therefore was her church orthodox and flourishing at home, and pressing to spread its blessings abroad. But when the light was extinguished by the Danes, and the churches and colleges destroyed, and the Bible itself immured in a foreign language, darkness covered the land, and gross darkness the people; until that word, which is "the Religion of Protestants," and which at the first commanded the light to shine out of darkness, broke the clouds, and gave the promise of a better day—and oh! never may the compromising spirit of expediency prevail to shade its effulgence with an attenuating veil. The spiritual eyes of faith can well bear the full brilliancy of the glory of God revealed in Jesus Christ, while mounting "up with wings, as "eagles;" (Is. x. 31,) nor is it at all requisite to reduce that glory to the twilight ray or reflected beam, by which celestial objects must be accommodated to mere corporeal vision.

I shall now present a very short summary of the doctrines of the early Christians of Ireland, connected solely with that fundamental and most essential one—the mode of a sinner's justification before God. These can only be collected from various parts of the remains of these teachers, as I am not aware that there

is existing any regular discourse of any of them on the subject. According to my plan, I shall confine myself to the opinions of those whom you have stamped in your history with the impress of authority; although, by doing so, I am obliged to forego the very valuable testimony of Claudius, the most diffuse and explicit Irish writer upon the subject.

You consider the Epistle of St. Patrick to Coroticus, and his confession to be genuine, (p. 223); and he writes in them thus—"I was," he says, "as a stone which "lies in the deep mire; and he who is mighty came, "and took me out of it in his mercy; and he indeed "raised me up, and placed me on the top of the wall"—(opusc. p. 5,) "but what shall I say, or what shall I "promise unto my Lord? because I see nothing that "he has not bestowed on me."—(p. 21.) And again—"*I am greatly* A DEBTOR TO GOD, who has vouch-"safed to me so much grace, that so many people "should be born again unto God, through me"—(opusc. 14.) once more—"Behold, I now commend "my soul to my most faithful God, whose ambas-"sador I am, in my great unworthiness"—"in ignobili-"tate meâ;" (p. 21 and 28,) "Non sum dignus Deo "neque hominibus subvenire"—"I am unworthy to "assist either God or man." Add to this, that all the genuine works of St. Patrick are but comments on the following text, which he thus himself most forcibly proposes—"These are not my words, but those of "God, and the apostles, and the prophets, that have "never lied. He who believeth shall be saved; but "he that believeth not shall be damned." (opus. p. 30.)

I shall now proceed to Sedulius, and shew how this doctrine was opened out by the Irish divines, even so late as the year 818. " All mankind stood " condemned in the apostatical root, (of Adam), with " so just and divine a judgment, that even were " none of them freed from thence, no man could " rightly blame the justice of God; and such as " were freed must have been so freed, that from " the many that were not freed but left in their " most just condemnation, it might be manifested " what the whole lump had deserved. That also " the due judgment of God had condemned even " those that are justified, *unless* mercy had relieved " them from that which was due; that every mouth of " those who gloried in their *merits*, might be stopped, " and he that glorieth should glory in the Lord." (in Rom. ix.)—" God hath so ordered it, that he will " be gracious to mankind; if they do believe that " they are to be freed by the blood of Christ"—(in Rom. 3,) " and the patriarchs and the prophets were " not justified by the works of the law, but by faith"—(in Gal. 2.) And lastly—" This faith when it hath " been justified, sticks in the soil of the soul, like a " root that hath received a shower; that, when it hath " begun to be cultivated by the law of God, boughs " may rise up again on it, which may bear the fruit " of works. *Therefore the root of righteousness* " *doth not grow out of works, but the fruit of works* " *from the root of righteousness*—namely, from that " root of righteousness, which God doth accept " for righteousness without works"—(in Rom. iv.)

This will serve as a specimen, and must suffice for the present; whosoever requires more of doctrine in this strain, will find it in the 2d chapter of Usher's Religion of the ancient Irish; in the volumes there referred to; and also in the works of the Irish Christians who wrote previously to the year 600, whose authority you have established by your approbation. I shall however, before I proceed to compare with these the doctrines of modern Roman Catholics and of Protestants, and also the declarations of Scripture, quote very shortly two remarkable passages from two Popes; the first of them St. Clement* the 3d bishop of Rome, who lived in the first century; and the second, Gaius, or Caius, who died A.D. 296. The former says—"We are not justified by ourselves, neither by "our own wisdom, or knowledge, or piety, or the "works that we have have done in holiness of heart; "but by that faith by which Almighty God hath "justified all men from the beginning." Gaius, says that "the righteousness of the saints avails nothing "to our *pardon or justification*."†

* See his Ep. to the Cor. c. 32, edited by Rev. Mr. Chevallier. I have quoted St. Clement before, from his 2d epistle to the Corinthians; and I have found by Mr. Chevallier's work, that there are doubts of the genuineness of this latter. I was not aware of this until after the sheet was printed off; but it is not a matter of much consequence to the main point of our argument—the tenets of the early *Irish* Christians.

† "Acceperunt justi, non dederunt, coronas. De fortitudine "fidelium exempla nata sunt patientiæ, non dona justitiæ. "Singulares quippe in singulis mortes fuerunt, nec alterius "quisquam debitum suo fine persolvlt; cum Filius hominis, "unus solus Dominus Jesus Christus, qui verè erat agnus "immaculatus, extiterit; in quo omnes crucifixi, omnes mortui, "omnes sepulti, omnes etiam sunt suscitati."—Bin. Conc. T. 1. p. 220.

These will fitly lead me, in historical order, to a short exhibition of the doctrines of the modern Roman Catholic church, on the great points of justification by faith, and the merit of works, in which it principally differs from those of the more ancient one of St. Patrick, and that also of the modern reformers. The council of Trent declares, (Trid. Sess. 6, can. 11, &c.)—"If any one say that men "are justified either by the sole imputed righteous- "ness of Christ, or the sole remission of sins, exclu- "sive of the grace and charity which should be shed "in their hearts by the Holy Spirit, and remain in "them; or *likewise that the grace, by which we be "justified, is the* MERE FAVOR OF GOD—Let him "be anathema." And again—"If any one shall say, "that the good works of a justified man are so the "gifts of God, that they are not also the good "merits of the justified man himself; or that the "justified man himself, by good works which, through "the grace of God and the merit of Christ, are done "by him, does not truly MERIT an increase of grace, "*eternal life*, and if he depart in grace, the possession "of eternal life, and also an increase of glory—let "him be accursed."—Vid. Can. 9, 11, 24, 30, 32.

I shall present the account of the immense value of these works in the eyes of the Roman Catholic church—(and valuable indeed they must be to co-operate with the blood of Christ)—from Dens' Theology, Vol. vi. p. 417. In answer to a question, what is an indulgence? we are there told, that it is the remission of sins—"per applicationem satisfac-

" tionum quæ in thesauro Ecclesiæ continentur." And, in answer to the next inquiry, respecting this treasury of the church, it is said, that " est cumulus " bonorum spiritualium permanentium in acceptatione " divinâ, et quorum dispositio Ecclesiæ est concre- " dita." The next question brings us directly to our point—from whence does the hoard of this, the church's treasury, arise ?—" Ex quibus thesaurus ille " coalescit ?"—The answer is ; first, from the " super- " abundant satisfaction of Christ"—" Deinde ex super- " effluentibus Beatæ Mariæ Virginis, et reliquorum " sanctorum, satisfactionibus."—" Then from the " OVERFLOWING satisfactions of the Blessed Virgin " Mary, and all the other saints !" This document then declares that " Beata Virgo Maria nullum un- " quam contraxit pœnæ debitum "—" that she never became liable to penalty" in other words, had no sin that requires a SAVIOUR ; and goes on to assert— " Sic apostoli, martyres, anachoritæ, aliique sancti et " sanctæ innumerabiles, plus passi sunt quàm exige- " bant eorum peccata, secundùm modum quem Deus " servat in pœnis exigentibus."—" So the apostles, " martyrs, anchorites, and other innumerable saints, " male and female, suffered more than their sins re- " quired, according to the mode which God observes in " exacting penalties."—Such is the doctrine of modern Romanism ; but whether it be consistent with that which the Blessed Virgin says of herself—" My spirit " hath rejoiced in God my SAVIOUR "—Luke i. 47. I shall leave to others to determine ; and content myself with exhibiting its more modern practical

effects, on the religious opinions of even the superior classes of Romanists in Ireland, by one striking and public instance. There is in the city of Cork a monument erected to the memory of a Roman Catholic gentleman, on which is inscribed the following epitaph—"Sacred to the memory of the "benevolent Edward Molloy," &c. "he employed "the wealth of this world only to secure the riches "of the next; and, leaving a balance of merit on the "book of life, *he made heaven* DEBTOR *to mercy*"!!! The date is 1818.

The articles of the church of England declare a doctrine essentially different from all this—and first, with reference to the last-mentioned subject, it lays down, that "Works of supererogation cannot be "taught without arrogancy and impiety; for by them "men do declare, that they do not only render unto "God *as much* as they are bound to do, but that "they do more for his sake than of bounden duty is "required; whereas Christ saith plainly—when ye "have done all that are commanded to you, say, we "are unprofitable servants."—Art. 14. Other doctrines of the same declare thus—"Original sin "standeth not in the following of Adam, (as the "Pelagians do vainly talk)"—so that we see, whatever the very first church in Ireland might according to your insinuations have thought of this sect, her present Protestants are not Pelagian—"but it is the fault and "corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally "is engendered of the offspring of Adam; whereby "man is very far gone from original righteousness,

" and is of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the " flesh lusteth always contrary to the spirit; and, " therefore, in every person born into this world, it " deserveth God's wrath and damnation "—Art. 9. Man " cannot turn and prepare himself by his own " natural strength and good works, to faith, and calling " upon God."—Art. 10. " We are accounted righteous " before God, *only* for the merit of our Lord and " Saviour Jesus Christ, by faith; and not for our own " works or deservings"—(Art. 11.)—and " Albeit " that good works, which are the fruits of faith, and " follow after justification, cannot put away our sins, " and endure the severity of God's judgment; yet are " they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and " do spring out *necessarily* of a true and lively faith; " insomuch that by them a lively faith may be as " evidently known, as a tree discerned by the fruit."—Art. 12.

It will be quite sufficient, as no one portion of Holy Scripture can contradict another, to present here, from St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, (c. ii. v. 1 to 10 incl.) a passage, which affords us perhaps the best and most condensed parallel to the summary of ancient doctrine that is before us—he is addressing the Ephesian converts to the Christian faith. " And " you hath *he quickened*, who *were dead* in trespasses " and sins; wherein in time past ye walked, according " to the course of this world, according to the prince " of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh " in the children of disobedience: among whom also " we ALL had our conversation in *times past in the*

" *lusts of our flesh;* fulfilling the desires of the flesh " and of the mind; and WERE BY NATURE *the children* " *of wrath, even as others.* But God, who is rich in " mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, *even* " *when we were dead in sins,* hath quickened us " together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved); and " hath raised us up together, and made us sit together " in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; that, in the ages " to come, he might shew the exceeding riches of his " grace, in his kind ness toward us through Christ " Jesus—*for by grace are ye saved* THROUGH FAITH; " *and that not of yourselves, it is the* GIFT *of* GOD; " NOT OF WORKS, *lest any man should boast.* For " we are his workmanship, *created* IN CHRIST JESUS, " UNTO GOOD WORKS, *which God hath before ordained* " *that we should walk in them.*"

From all this it is now sufficiently clear, that in the two grand fundamental questions—the great standard of doctrine, and the point of doctrine most essential to salvation—we have the written word first, the opinions of the primitive bishops of Rome next, and lastly, the doctrines of the early Irish Christians, directly and irreconcilably opposed to modern Romanism; and we have the tenets of the reformers, or restorers, or Protestants, or call them what you will, perfectly agreeing with the three first. We see, therefore, that their religion is no novelty, but simply the old sterling and valuable coin rubbed clear of its rust, and restored to its original brightness; enabling us to distinguish the counterfeit,

and thus to render unto God the things that are God's.

There is one very important conclusion indeed, which follows quite logically from all that has preceded—and it follows from it equally if any *one* of Archbishop Usher's main assertions be found to be true—it is this, that the early Irish Christians *could not* have been Romanists. Doctor Murray, Roman Catholic archbishop of Dublin, has, in a recent controversy, afforded us the major proposition of this syllogism in the following terms:—"He who "denies *one* article of faith proposed as such by the "Catholic Church, tears up the foundation on which "the whole system rests, pronounces it to have fallen "from the privilege of inerrability, and to have "ceased to be the pillar and ground of truth."—And again—"The man who would prefer his own "private judgment to the decision of the entire "church, and would reject, as untrue, that which it "declares to have been revealed, would deny its infal-"libility and protest against its doctrines; or, in "other words, he would by the very fact become a "Protestant." But the early Irish Christians did, as we must admit, at the least deny some *one* article—did prefer their "own private judgment to the decision of the "entire church." Ergo, they were "*Protestant.*"

I have now, I trust, vindicated Archbishop Usher from the charge of groundless assertion, that you have advanced against him; and rescued an important fact from the mistake in which you have sought to involve

it. And I would request of the public, before they form their final decision upon the question, to weigh well the evidence; and to remember, that I have relied on none but the confessions afforded by your History, or the authorities first produced and approved by yourself. It is then to be hoped that they will come to the conclusion to which I have been compelled to arrive—that, trained in the fields of fancy, you afford a striking example, in choosing this novel walk of historian, of "that facility in yielding to "new impulses and influences, which, in the Irish "character, is found so remarkably combined with a "fond adherence to old usages and customs; and with "that sort of *retrospective imagination*, which for "ever yearns after the past" (p. 203); and that *that* imagination has rather inclined you to give us, for historical fact, a little too much "of what may be "called the poesy of real life." And yet, where that natural bias of your mind has not been indulged, and where your other early prejudices have no opportunity of swaying, I would not wish to deprive your history of that place of classical record, in which it has appeared; a place of which it is by no means undeserving, were almost all that you have written upon the solemn subject of religion blotted from its page. Upon that one subject, however—I must repeat it, and I think that I am imperatively called upon, by your great influence even in politics, and your merited popularity as a national poet, to urge it forcibly—you are utterly incompetent to inform, or to instruct; and this for the following reasons.

You are in the first place not dispassionate and unprejudiced, when you treat of it. This fact is evidenced by your history, and put beyond a doubt by your other publications. I had once hoped that your mind had soared above your prejudices, from a redeeming note that occurs in your memoirs of Captain Rock, appended to the following words—"Our own priests not suffering us to read the Bible." p. 187. "The arguments," you there say, "of the Roman "Catholic clergy against the use of the Bible as a "class-book are well-founded; but the length to which "some of them carry their objections to a free and "general perusal of the Scriptures, is inconsistent "with the spirit as well of civil, as of religious, "liberty."—But these expectations have now vanished, and left me to wonder at, and to lament, the fettering power of superstitious shackles upon the mind nursed in Romanism, so great, that the united forces of exalted talents, the best education, and the most brilliant society, are not of strength sufficient to break them. The evil consequences of this to the historian are numerous and great; in your instance it has especially led to the following—it has brought you to grossly corrupted sources of information. You remind me forcibly of that passage in Jeremiah—"My people have committed two evils; they have "forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters; and "hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can "hold no water."—(ii. 13.) In like manner you have most unaccountably and inexcusably neglected, you have scarcely if at all noticed, the evidence of

the Record of Eternal Truth; which, even allowing your traditions and your legends to be admissible evidence at all, is doubtless the very best that can be adduced on every disputed question of religion; and most manifestly so in one of antiquity of doctrine, being as it is the most ancient—the very source and origin of all. I was indeed greatly surprised at that passage in your history, where in speaking of a controversy between Dungal and Claudius of Turin, who asserted that "saints ought not to be honoured or "any reverence paid to images," you allege it to be a "point solely to be decided by authority and tra- "dition—the constant practice of the church from "the very earliest times," p. 296. You do not say, even on that obvious occasion, one word of the sacred Scriptures, as authority, either in the way of precept, or of precedent. And, again, where speaking of communion in both kinds, you style it to be "a "mere point of discipline," (p. 240,) without meeting our allegation, that it is one of positive command; or deigning to notice the testimony of the Word of God, even in reference to your own most confined view of the practice. These instances will suffice to shew how you have forsaken the fountain head, your history exhibits it fully; as it also does the other point, that you have "hewn out cisterns, that hold "no water." Their character is thus given by yourself, (p. 233,)—"It is to be recollected, however, "that through all this picture the hands of ecclesiastics "have chiefly guided the pencil; and, though there "can be no doubt, that the change effected in the

" minds and hearts of the people was to a great " extent as real, as it is wonderful, it was yet by no " means either so deep, or so general, as on the " face of these monkish annals it appears." You have proved to us (p. 257) the falsehood of the legend, it can scarcely be called " The Life, of St. " Brigid;" by exhibiting " one of those violations " of chronology *not unfrequently* HAZARDED for " the purpose of bringing extraordinary personages " together;" and which I have already exposed. You have admitted (p. 236,) that, " in citing for " historical purposes, 'The Lives of Saints,' of " whatever age or country, considerable caution " ought, of course, to be observed:" yet from the muddy waters of these dark annalists, and these still darker credulous and false biographers, you have drawn your chief supply. That " Life of St. " Brigid" you have made, with astonishing indifference, to be your *only* ground for " the invoking " and praying to saints;" and from the lives of other saints you have cited amply, with much more credulity than " caution," in support both of history, and of superstitions. You have indeed quoted, in condemnation of " writers, who in the " pride of fancied wisdom assert a contempt for this " species of evidence," the opinions of Gibbon, of Montesquieu, and Sir James Mackintosh; and I will say that I go as far as they do in these opinions. I do think, with the first of these writers, that " the " ancient legendaries deserve *some* regard;" with Montesquieu, that " on ne laisse pas dèn tirer de

" grandes lumières sur les moeurs, et les usages de " ces temps là :" and especially with Sir James, that " the vast collections of 'the Lives of the " Saints' often throw light on public events, and " open glimpses into the habits of men in those " times ; nor are they wanting in sources of interest, " *though poetical and moral*, RATHER THAN HIS- " TORICAL." (p. 236, note.) But remember that Gibbon adds, as his foundation for his " some " regard," these words—" as they are obliged to con- " nect their FABLES with the real history of their " own times ;" that Montesquieu commences with reproaching them that they were " un peu trop " credules ;" and that Mackintosh excludes their testimony from the character of historical, altogether. I consider them, indeed, in the light of spiritual romances ; and, as we can catch many glimpses of the customs of the times they treat of from the fables of chivalry, while none but a Don Quixote would depend on them for facts ; so these legendary biographers may give us some insight into the manners of the cloisters, by the very stories which it will require the faith of a spiritual Quixote to believe. I cannot therefore attribute the incautious partiality that you have evinced to them, to any thing but the prejudice of your mind. It is exceedingly to be lamented how much such influence interferes, to mar and impede every research into the very interesting antiquities, whether religious or otherwise, of our country ; nor is Dr. Ledwich the only person that is liable to this imputation—he was

a bold sceptic in Irish antiquities, it is true; but he was often an honest and daring advocate for the truth; and was, I believe, rightly jealous of its evidences. Let us take the instance of Adamnan's life of St. Columbkille; "a work," as you say, "of which "a fastidious Scotch critic," (Pinkerton,) has pronounced, that "it is the most complete piece of such "biography that all Europe can boast of, not only at "so early a period, but even through the whole "middle ages;" (p. 286,) but of which Ledwich fearlessly asserts, "it is a heap of credulity and super-"stition." (p. 89.) Perhaps indeed Pinkerton meant to insinuate the same, in the equivocal sentence that you have transcribed from him; but of this I am certain, and the fact can be easily ascertained by any one who will take the trouble of looking at the work, (he will find it in the florilegium of Messingham,) that the declaration of Ledwich concerning it is quite according to the truth. I differ much in most points from this antiquarian, but I trust that he is right where, laying aside that character, he appears in his more appropriate one of a Protestant clergyman, and declares, that it is not possible "that the Roman "Catholics of Ireland will be longer amused with "fictitious legends, or pay their adoration to ideal "personages. The night of ignorance and superstition is passed, and with it the rustic and undiscerning piety of dark ages. A scriptural, rational, "and manly religion, is alone calculated for their "present improvements in science and manners." I feel it necessary, as the merit of St. Adamnan's work

is so magnified by you, to bring forward something from it that will justify my opinion of it; and I shall do so the more readily, because that I can with much propriety say, "ex uno disce omnes;" for if this, the "most complete piece," be thus filled with credulity and superstition, the banes of true history, how must they abound in those which are less complete. From the second book—of miracles—to which it is entirely confined, I shall present the headings of a very few chapters as specimens—"C. i. Quomodo S. Columba "aquam in vinum convertit, et arborem pomorum ex "amarâ reddit dulcem"—"c. ii. Quomodo seges, in "Junio seminata, in principio Augusti metitur."—Not to fatigue the reader I shall select but two more—"c. xii. Quomodo S. Columba belluæ marinæ im-"perat, et puerum mortuum suscitat;" and "c. xiv. "Quomodo S. Columba contra tempestatem, a *Magis* "*excitatam*, securé navigat." It is to be observed that all the headings in this book are similar, and scarcely any thing but such fables occur in the work.*

* I know that it will be thought by some, that the working of miracles did not cease with the apostolic age, but that the power was vouchsafed to the first preachers of the Gospel among the heathen; and such a privilege the Abbé Mc Geoghegan claims, as we have seen, for St. Patrick; and such also, by a parity of reason, may be said to have belonged to St. Columbkille, as the apostle of the Picts. But it might be expected that, if the sainted missionary was possessed of any miraculous gift, as an apostle, it should have been in the first instance, and according to scriptural analogy, of the gift of tongues; and yet we are expressly told the contrary by Adamnan himself. I quote from a note that is appended to your 245th page, where he informs us—that the holy man preached to the Picts, through an interpreter.

I must here repeat the fact, although I am not willing to attribute its occurrence to a prejudice in your mind against him and his doctrines, of the omission of Claudius from your account of eminent writers: he was among the most eminent, and was supposed to have been one of the founders of the University of Paris; he flourished about the same time as Claudius of Turin, that is, A.D. 815. Archbishop Usher has quoted very amply from his works; and they afforded him the most decided evidence of the purity of the doctrine of the Irish church, in the days in which he flourished. This should have entitled him to notice, and his arguments to a candid hearing; yet, strange to say, his name occurs no where in your work: and your silence respecting him has deprived our cause, as it is now advocated by me upon the principle of resting on the evidence only of such witnesses as you have produced or approved, of a testimony the most unequivocal and unexceptionable, to the difference between the doctrine of modern Romanists and the early Irish divines, even so late as the year 815. In fine, I must recapitulate by declaring my decided opinion, that, because of your predilection in favour of Romanism, and the too great development and activity of your organ of ideality, you are incapacitated from being the unprejudiced and dispassionate historian of the Religion of the ancient Irish.

But you are further unfitted for that office by your indifference on the subject—although, as to the most material of all, being connected with the eternal happiness of mankind, you should have given

it ample space and full consideration in your work; especially as it influences almost every concern in Ireland, and greatly occupies the minds of thousands of its inhabitants. Yet you have thought fit to dismiss it in a jejune and apparently supercilious manner; and have turned quite round on your heel from "the admirable Usher"—not because you despised his learning, for this you are compelled to admit—what reason then had you for it, and for your slight notice of the entire question in less than four pages, but your apparent indifference towards it? This feeling, or want of feeling rather, you have also manifested in your vague and careless mode of reference to your authorities, of which I have so often complained. In fine, had you thought the subject to have been at all deserving of your notice, as it really is, you could not have discussed its doctrines so lightly as you have done.

Another circumstance incapacitates you from being the historian of matter so important, your utter unacquaintance with the native language, and the original documents of Ireland. It would, I feel, be unreasonable to require a great knowledge of the first; but at least a smattering of it is surely necessary, if it were only sufficient to enable the historian, in some degree, to check the information which he often receives through suspicious channels; and to save his work from such a jumble* of letters as you have

* In the note to p. 53 the proper sentence, "do rinnedur san "fós ar an mogh gceadna," is presented thus, "dor innedur— "san fós aran moghgceadna."

presented us with, when you have ventured to quote the Irish language in your book—a little less, however, of the preceding disqualification, indifference, would have enabled you to have avoided this. But, passing by this unfashionable requisite, in which ignorance may be venial; it is by no means so in the case of original documents, written in the Latin tongue, with the very existence of which you are utterly unacquainted; I shall give one remarkable example. In p. 252 you assert, that "In the Annals of the Four "Masters, for the year 1006, we find mention of a "splendid copy of the four Gospels, said to have been "written by St. Columba's own hand, and preserved "at Kells, in a cover richly ornamented with gold. "In the time of Usher this precious MS. was still "numbered among the treasures of Kells." Adding in a note—"This Kells MS. is supposed to have "been the same now preserved in the Library of "T. C. Dublin, on the margin of which are the "following words, written by O'Flaherty in the year "1677: 'Liber autem hic scriptus est manu ipsius "B. Columbæ.'" What a strange confusion have we here given as information to the public, which had been entirely avoided by a very little deeper research; and by what one would have reasonably expected from the historian of Ireland—a visit to the great repository of our University. You would by these means have discovered, that this noble relic, most justly styled "totius Europæ facilé principem," was in Usher's time, not in Kells, but in his own possession; that it passed from his hands into those ultimately of

Dublin College ; that not it, but the Book of Durrow, is that which is inscribed as you have mentioned by O'Flaherty ; and that the Book of Kells stands, and has stood for much more than a century, in its place in the depository of MSS. in the Library of that college ; and has been for perhaps eighty years entered most legibly into the catalogue* of these MSS. which has always lain quite accessible upon the table. Now, there is no excuse whatever for your neglect in not looking farther into this matter than you have done ; the hint that was given you, and which is mentioned in your note, you should have followed up ; you are sufficiently alive to the great value of the document itself, and how it was appreciated ; you should, therefore, have searched for and examined it, at least before you ventured upon that page of error on the

* This catalogue has been enlarged, or rather has been embodied in one of this most extensive and interesting collection which I was engaged to form, and which is now deposited in the MS. room of the library. The Book of Kells is in the press A. 1. 5, the Book of Durrow in A. 4. 5, where they have both lain for upwards of a century. While compiling this catalogue I have sat with Dr. O'Connor in the Library; I have frequently conversed, and have since corresponded with him, on Irish subjects ; and I never suspected the extraordinary fact, that he was entirely ignorant of the existence of the Book of Kells, although it was displayed in the same press with that of Durrow, of which he has given good facsimiles in his Rer. Hib. Scrip. and of which, as well as of the Book of Kells, he has written so much. I think it no excuse to you, that you had such a leader in your ignorance, for it is manifest that you made no research whatever; and since the Doctor wrote, and before you commenced your history, the Book of Kells has been put forward to notice in a new binding, and with an inscription, which makes it impossible that it should escape unnoticed now.

subject of our ancient books, your 309th. You should indeed not only have known of these books, and seen them, but have collated, or caused to be collated, some of their peculiar versions; exhibiting as they do variances from St. Jerome's Latin translation, although written in that language themselves, and thus affording a collateral proof of the independent character of the early Irish church; and not, when you are so very vulnerable on this head yourself, have put forward the "zealous and amiable scholar," as you style him—Dr. O'Conor—as one who "on most points connected "with that theme," his country's antiquities, "adopts "as proved what has only been boldly asserted;" so as to "render him, with all his real candour and learning, "not always a trustworthy witness." You should at least have taken some more fortunate opportunity* than this for making the observation; from the injury of which I am the more anxious to rescue† the memory

* Ille qui deridet, caudam trahit.

† You take much pains in that passage to sink the authority of O'Conor, by bearing down upon him with the weight of that of Mr. Astle; but, however, the fact is, that they are giving opinions which are perfectly reconcileable with each other. The MS. of the four Gospels to which "Dr. O'Conor triumphantly "refers," is written in the Latin language; and the assertion of Mr. Astle is, "that the oldest Irish MS." or MS. in the Irish tongue, "which has been discovered, is the Psalter of Cashel, "written in the tenth century."

It must here be observed, that Mr. Astle is not authority on this subject—besides that he did not understand Irish, he writes from the accounts of others, citing only Ware. He does not seem even to have seen the Irish MS. of which he speaks; but had he, for example, examined the copies of Brehon laws deposited in the Library of T.C.D. he must have formed a different judgment. Had he also seen the Books of Kells and Durrow, he

of this most learned and honest and laborious antiquarian, because that I know that, on account of his faithfulness in his accounts given, in his letters of Columbanus, of the real history of the ancient Irish church, he was prevented from officiating in Dublin, as a priest of the Roman Catholic* communion; and although he never quitted it, was every where aspersed by his brethren, and is in no very good odour with any Romanist. As a specimen also of what you should not have neglected, in the seeking for and examining our ancient books, I shall mention our famed book of Armagh; which is accessible, and which we have often had occasion to notice; you should, either of yourself or through others, have become better acquainted with it, containing as it does a remarkable life of St. Patrick, and various readings of the New Testament. Finally, in this and other such instances of neglect, you have failed in your duty as an historian.

But, still more than the circumstances which I have already mentioned, you are precluded from being the proper historian of the religion of Ireland, by your not having yourself very clear ideas upon that inte-

must also have given an opinion of their greater antiquity. Dr. O'Conor was more competent than he to determine upon books that were merely Irish; and I feel myself justified, upon his testimony and that of other skilful judges, to assert, that with respect to them Mr. Astle was mistaken in his judgment.

* See his correspondence with Dr. Troy, upon the subject, in the letters of Columbanus, No. VII. What this *really liberal* Romanist says of Archbishop Usher, and his arguments, in No. III. p. 50, of these letters, demonstrates at once his candour and good sense.

resting subject. Without entering into a controversial consideration of certain passages in other parts of your history; or dwelling again upon your naming that doctrine a *heresy*, which "maintained, that saints "ought *not* to be honoured, *nor any reverence paid to* "IMAGES;" or referring to errors which a Roman Catholic will hold to be not such; I must repeat and urge the instance of your argument in page 305, respecting the real presence. You there represent the pure and spiritual doctrine of the Protestant church, as being your own, and claim it for the ancient Irish also; while it is clear from the entire tenor of your argument, that you nevertheless suppose it not to be the Protestant, but the modern Roman Catholic tenet on that subject.

With your manner of treating other subjects I have no business here—save only to give deserved credit to your industry and to your talents; and to make one short and necessary comment respecting your politics as a writer, upon a point inseparable from the subject before us. I must introduce it by observing, that I do not condemn your nationality, but would only wish that you had exhibited it with a more truly national feeling; and not, when whatever of severity or impolicy had formerly marked the English dominancy had vanished away, have agitated the settling minds of the people, roused with your martial music the slumbering rancour of the Irish against the Saxon name, and fanned the dying embers of national and religious jealousy to a devastating flame. But you have yet an opportunity, when you are entering upon

the later centuries of your history, to take off a portion of the combustible material from the raging fire; by assuring the poor Irishman of the fact—that it is not to the Saxon invasion that he is to attribute the establishment of Protestantism in this island; that with the British conquest first came a full acquiescence in a subjection to the see of Rome; and that, although you will still perhaps continue to deny that the Roman Catholic was an innovation on the primitive church in Ireland, it was not until about the period of Henry the Second's invasion, that the Pope sent over his palls, and his legates, or assumed any thing like the authority which he has since laid claim to. At this period, Adrian IV. and Alexander III. committed, by bulls, this "barbarous nation," as they pleased to call it, into the King's hands; with a full commission to subdue it—to spill the blood of its inhabitants, under the pretence of spreading the gospel of peace; and on the condition of transmitting to Rome the tax of Peter's pence, for the promoting of *His* religion, whose kingdom is not of this world. Tell them the following fact; and if you tell it in poesy, I am sure it will be much better than the chronicler's, that—

> The King Henry then conquered all Ireland,
> By Papall dome—
> For errour which agayn the spiritualtee
> They held full long—(HARDYNG'S CHRON. c. 132.)

and, disuniting Protestantism from the hated name of Saxon, let simple truth have fair play.

With the department of theology, however, you should not interfere, until you have given your mind

to a calm consideration of that most solemn subject. Oh that your muse, with whose national eloquence I have often sympathised, were yet inspired to breathe forth the praises of Jehovah! Then, indeed, instead of regretting that you made Christianity in Ireland your subject, I should watch, more anxiously than I ever did for a promised number of your melodies, to hail some new effusion of your eminently poetic talent. Oh, my dear sir, reflect—do but reflect—how responsible you are for the use of that important—that influential gift. How rapidly is the time—the moment, for its enjoyment here, passing—fleeting away! How very soon we shall both of us stand before the judgment seat of our Redeemer—now inviting in mercy, but then retributing in justice—and give an account of the improvement or abuse of the talents committed to our charge. With real desire that you as well as I may be instructed in all truth, and that we may be enabled to abide in it unto life eternal—

I am your's, faithfully,

HENRY J. MONCK MASON.

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POSTSCRIPT.

SINCE this letter was completed, I have been induced to make some inquiry respecting one part of it, which, from my deficiency of information at the time, I thought proper to confine to the place of a mere note, but which I have now found not only a fit subject for a place in the letter itself, but deserving of the most particular attention. It exhibits as striking an instance of dishonest misquotation as I have ever met with—but in using these terms, I do not mean to apply the degrading epithet to your motives, for I know that you took the passage from O'Connor, without putting yourself to further trouble; nor do I apply them to that learned and honest man, who I am willing to believe took it, also rather lazily, from some previous writer: but I lay the charge boldly at the door of some previous advocate of your cause. I stated in the note to p. 63, that you have misquoted the words of Tertullian, who says, "Oblationes pro defunctis pro natalitiis annuâ die facimus," as if he had merely said, "Oblationes pro defunctis annuâ die facimus." The first sentence signifies, "We make oblations for the deceased for their birth-days annually;" the second, "We make oblations for the deceased annually." I did observe the term "defunctis" instead of "mortuis;" and suspect that of "pro natalitiis" to be highly material, and I have

since found that it is indeed so; as it gives an entire change to the custom referred to, in all its character and circumstances; and alludes to one of the most beautiful parts of the history of primitive persecution and martyrdom. In the Rev. Mr. Chevallier's Epistles of Clement, &c. just published, (p. 164, note,) you will find the whole matter opened out.—The following is an extract—"These anniversaries of the days on which the martyrs suffered, were called their birth-days, on which they were freed from trials of mortality, and born as it were into the joys and happiness of heaven—Thus Tertullian de Coron. Militis, c. 3, says—'*Oblationes pro defunctis pro natalitiis annuâ die facimus*"—(the very sentence you have relied on.) He then proceeds to give some instances of allusions to this custom, made by St. Cyprian, and adds the following: "After Cyprian himself had suffered for the faith, we find Peter Chrysologus, in his Sermon on the Martyrdom of Cyprian, using the like expressions: 'Natalem sanctorum cum audistis, fratres, nolite putare illum dici quo nascuntur in terram de carne; sed de terrâ in cœlum, de labore ad requiem, de tentationibus ad quietem, de cruciatibus ad delicias—non fluxas, sed fortes et stabiles et æternas—de mundanis risibus ad coronam et gloriam—Tales natales dies martyrum celebrantur,"—"Do not think the birth-day of saints to be one to the earth in the flesh; but from earth into heaven, from labour to repose, from temptations to rest, from tortures to delights—not fleeting, but strong, steady, and eternal—from the scorn of

the world to the crown and to glory." "The manner," he proceeds, "of celebrating the memories of the martyrs and confessors in the primitive Church was this—On the anniversary day the people assembled, sometimes at the tombs where the martyrs had been buried. They then publicly praised God for those who had glorified him by their sufferings and death, recited the history of their martyrdom, and heard a sermon preached in commemoration of their patience and Christian virtues. They offered up fervent prayers to God, and celebrated the Eucharist in commemoration of Christ's passion, and gave alms to the poor. They kept also a public festival provided by general contribution, to which the poorer brethren were freely admitted."

The occasion of this note is a passage in the martyrdom of Polycarp, which is highly interesting, and which I shall transcribe for you from the Latin of Eus. Ecc. Hist. lib. iv. c. 15—"Concedat Deus *natalem ejus martyrii diem cum hilaritate et gaudio celebrare*; tum in memoriam eorum qui glorioso certamini perfuncti sunt, tum ad posteros hujusmodi exemplo erudiendos et confirmandos"—"May God grant to us to celebrate the *birth-day* of his martyrdom with cheerfulness and joy; as well in memory of those who have accomplished the glorious conflict, as for teaching and confirming their followers by such an example." Here then we find that this pure hallowed primitive oblation was the most spiritual sacrifice of thanksgiving possible, offered for men—deceased certainly, but—UNDOUBTEDLY gone to glory, and not

to purgatorial fire, (Rev. xx. 4, vi. 9, &c.)—for one here, for instance, who even from the burning of this world's fires was miraculously preserved; and it reminds us of that striking and difficult passage of 1 Cor. xv. 29—"Why are they baptized for the dead," and its context—by exhibiting a most powerful motive to the Christian believer in the resurrection, to be faithful even unto death.

I hope, my dear sir, you will take a hint from this failure; and attend, in the next volumes of your history, to what experience has taught me to be indispensable—I mean to consult your originals, when you quote authorities upon any occasion of importance.

I shall take this opportunity of transcribing one more passage from the martyrdom of Polycarp, and give it in the English of Mr. Chevallier; it demonstrates an early abhorrence of any thing like the present honor paid by the Romanists to martyrs. It was suggested by the Jews to the governor, to prevent the Christians from taking the body of Polycarp, lest they should begin to worship this Polycarp—"not considering," says the writer, "that it is impossible for us either ever to forsake Christ, who suffered for the salvation of all such as shall be saved throughout the whole world, (the righteous for the ungodly); or to worship any other. For HIM indeed, as being the Son of God, we ADORE; but for the martyrs we worthily *love* them, as the disciples and imitators of our Lord, on account of their exceeding great love towards their Master and King."

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